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The Future State

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The Future State

BY

THE REV. S. C. GAYFORD, M.A.

VICE-PRINCIPAL OF CUDDESDON COLLEGE

RIVINGTONS

34 *KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN*

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TO

MY FATHER

PREFACE

I WISH to thank the following especially for personal help of various kinds:—the Very Rev. Dr. Mortimer Luckock, Dean of Lichfield; the Rev. Dr. R. H. Charles, Professor of Biblical Greek, Trinity College, Dublin; the Rev. Dr. C. Taylor, Master of St. John's College, Cambridge; and Canon J. O. Johnston, Principal of Cuddesdon College. Of books dealing with the subject of the Future State I have found most useful Professor Salmond's *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*; Professor Charles' *Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish and Christian*; and Principal Agar Beet's *The Last Things*.

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PART I

JEWISH BELIEF BEFORE CHRIST

CHAPTER I

THE BELIEF IN A FUTURE LIFE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT[1]

It will be well at the outset of this chapter to state the purpose which we have in mind. Our object is to find out what the Old Testament writers themselves understood and believed about the state of the soul after death. Under the influence of the Spirit which was in them these men were inspired to write many things of which they themselves only partly understood the meaning. Thus, for instance, our Lord draws out a hidden meaning from the words 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' (Exodus iii. 6; see Matt. xxii. 32, Mark xii. 26, Luke xx. 37). With teaching like this, contained by implication in the sacred writings, and left for later ages and teachers to perceive

[1] Readers who wish to study this question further may consult the following works:—Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, Book II., 'The Old Testament Preparation'; Charles, *Eschatology—Hebrew, Jewish and Christian*, chaps. i.-iv.; A. B. Davidson, article on 'Eschatology of the Old Testament' in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*; J. B. Mozley, 'Essay on Jewish and Heathen Conceptions of a Future State' in his *Lectures and other Theological Papers*. A chapter on the subject will be found in books dealing with the theology of the Old Testament: see *e.g.* Burney, *Old Testament Theology* in this series, chap. viii.

and disclose, we are not here concerned. Our present purpose is with those beliefs only which the saints of the Old Dispensation were conscious of possessing.

The Hebrew nation was a branch of that family of the human race which is known as Semitic. From this origin they derived not only their peculiarities of face and language, but also their earliest religious beliefs. And when they were chosen to be the recipients of a special Revelation from God, this did not mean that all their old religion was to be cleared away with one sweep, and the page left blank for the new religion to be imprinted on it. So far as we are allowed to perceive the workings of God in Revelation, they are not of this kind. The old religion was allowed to remain at first; then, one by one, new truths were revealed and allowed to work upon the old beliefs, until gradually the old was purged first of its coarsest, least spiritual elements, and then by degrees of its other errors. A great truth was disclosed, and left to work in men's minds, to be assimilated, examined from this side and that, followed out in all its consequences, until it broke down all the old ideas which were inconsistent with it, and the way was cleared for a further and still fuller revelation.

This truth is well illustrated by the early Hebrew beliefs about the Future State. To the east of the Hebrews there lived another Semitic people known to us as the Babylonians. From their kinship with the Hebrews, we should expect to find resemblances between the religious beliefs of the two peoples. And it happens that on the subject of the life after death a tolerably full account of the Babylonian belief has come down to us. In brief outline it was somewhat as follows:[1] As

[1] For a fuller account see L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion* (1899), pp. 35-52; and Hommel's article on 'Babylonia' in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

soon as the dead man is buried, his 'shade' goes beneath the earth to the 'House of the Dead,' a land of murky darkness, filled with choking sand, barren and desolate. Here, clothed with birds' feathers and feeding upon dust, all the 'shades' are gathered together. No distinctions of any kind appear between them: earthly rank and character make no difference in the lot of the dead.[1] This unhappy kingdom is ruled by a queen with a body-guard of horrible demons. High walls and vigilant guardians prevent escape.

The Hebrew view of the state of the dead has many points of striking similarity with the Babylonian. Let us consider first the ordinary popular conception. The Hebrew never thought of death as the total extinction of existence. The soul, in which resides the man's personality, that which thinks and feels and desires, is separated from the body at death, but it does not therefore cease to exist. But, on the other hand, the existence after death is never called 'life': for 'life' to a Hebrew meant a much more than mere conscious existence. It included many blessings, and especially the blessing of communion with God, from which the man was cut off by death. In the Hebrew belief, when a man died his soul went down beneath the earth to '*Sheol*' (probably = 'the hollow place'), the land of the 'shades' (literally, 'feeble ones'). Here it found the 'shades' of all who had died before: hence the common expression, 'gathered unto his fathers.' 'Sheol' is also called by other significant names. As a cavern far under the earth it is called 'the pit,' *e.g.* Ps. xxx. 9; also 'the lower parts of the earth,' *e.g.* Ps. lxiii. 9. As a land of gloom and darkness, cut off from all communication with life

[1] The 'judges' mentioned are probably not those who pass judgment on the earthly life, but rulers and arbitrators amongst the dead in the under-world.

and gladness, it is called 'the pit of destruction' (Ps. lv. 23); 'the land of darkness and of the shadow of death' (Job x. 22); 'silence' (Ps. cxv. 17). As the land of inhospitable desolation, disorder and dreary confusion, it is called 'the dust' (Ps. xxii. 29), and its inhabitants 'they that dwell (Isa. xxvi. 19) or sleep (Dan. xii. 2) in the dust.'

The condition of the dead is such as we should infer from this conception of Sheol. The descriptions are not, however, always quite uniform. Sometimes the 'shades' are pictured as continuing in some measure their former occupations. The dead kings in Isa. xiv. 9 still sit on their thrones. The dead Samuel (1 Sam. xxviii. 11-19) still prophesies. In both cases these dead ones know what is happening in the world above, and retain their interest in the fortunes of their survivors. But the more general view of the dead gives a more gloomy picture of their condition. According to this view the dead lose all knowledge and interest in the affairs of the living. Even the father ceases to follow the fortunes of his children (Job xiv. 21). The dead 'know not anything' (Eccl. ix. 5). All hope of return to the upper world is cut off. The cases of restoration to life are exceptional and miraculous. Such a hope is indeed suggested, but only to be set aside at once as impossible (so Ps. lxxxviii. 10, Job xiv. 12). Yet, hardest of all to bear was the dreadful thought that death put an end to all communion with God. The dead have no knowledge of God. They cannot praise Him (Ps. vi. 5, xxx. 9; Is. xxxviii. 18-19). Some passages even speak as if Sheol were outside the dominion of Jehovah. The dead are no more remembered of Him, cut off from His hand (Ps. lxxxviii. 5). His wonder-working power and His love are unknown in Sheol. Other passages, however, equally early with these, rise to a higher level, and assert the

truth of God's omnipotence and omnipresence, by extending the dominion of Jehovah over Sheol (see especially Amos ix. 2, Ps. cxxxix. 8).

This dreary, joyless existence is the fate of all alike after death. Earthly distinctions such as those of master and servant, prisoner and oppressor, disappear (Job iii. 18, 19). Nor can we see any signs that the popular belief included the thought of judgment after death for the works of this life. In the land of the dead, good and bad, Jew and Gentile, are all in the same condition. Sheol equalises all (1 Sam. xxviii. 19, Isa. xiv. 9, Eccl. ix. 5). This life here on earth is the scene of God's rewards and punishments. In the world of the dead the wicked have no more to fear than the good, the good no more to hope for than the wicked. There was, in fact, but one ray of comfort in the thought of Sheol. In comparison with a life of great suffering it seemed to be a land of rest. The wearied and broken-hearted might even look forward to Sheol as a refuge where they might have one blessing at least which they could not find on earth. So Job in the bitterness of his spirit longs for death and Sheol: for 'there the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest' (Job iii. 17). 'There is rest in the dust' (*ibid.* xvii. 16).

The view above described may be said to represent the ordinary popular conception of the condition of the dead. The points of resemblance with the Babylonian beliefs are obvious. They show us that this popular Hebrew view was derived, not from the revelation given to Israel, but from the old religion common to Semitic heathenism. But, at the same time, when compared with the Babylonian, the Hebrew view shows signs that a higher Spirit has already been at work, purifying and elevating the still earlier beliefs from which it was derived. The description which we have given touches the lowest level

of Hebrew thought about the state of the dead. It takes us to the most primitive stages of their belief as contained in their written books.[1] But, even so, the Hebrew belief is raised far above the Babylonian. The grossest features of the 'House of the Dead' have already disappeared. The 'shades' are not clothed with birds' feathers. There is no 'Queen of the dead,' and no attendant troop of horrible demons. Thus, then, even this early stage of popular thought bears marks of having been brought into contact with a higher influence. But the Old Testament has much more than this to show. The men who thought most deeply and lived most religiously came to feel that this popular half-heathen view did not accord with other truths which had been revealed by God to their nation. The conditions of the life after death only entered (as we shall presently see) incidentally into the Revelation vouchsafed to the Jews. It was not a direct object of Revelation. And so the only way to rise above this popular view lay in recognising that this view clashed with other parts of the revealed truth. And only a few choice spirits had the insight to see this. It needed a spiritual man who had laid hold of what was revealed and made it his own by living in it. It needed also a man of quick and trained intelligence, who could follow out the message of the Law and the Prophets into its bearing on the life after death, and perceive that it implied something different from the popular view. It needed further a man of strength and independence to break away from old-established and inbred convictions. It is no wonder that no one under the Old Covenant was able to fulfil all these conditions so completely as to

[1] It is possible, though not certain, that there existed amongst the Hebrews a still earlier Ancestor-worship. But such a worship, if it ever existed, must date from a much earlier time than the first appearance of the Hebrew nation in history.

find a firm footing in a higher belief. We must not be surprised to meet with a tone of hesitation and uncertainty. And we must be prepared to hear that in one of the latest books of the Old Testament, Ecclesiastes, the popular belief may still be the stronger of the two.[1] Yet, notwithstanding, some few of the more gifted souls were able to break away, if only tentatively and temporarily, from the old opinions. It is with these that we have now to do.

The advance on the popular doctrine was made along two distinct lines. The first was the outcome of deep spiritual struggles with the mysteries of life, in which the current views of Sheol were more or less clearly felt to stand in contradiction to the Divine Love and Justice. The men who felt this most deeply were not necessarily themselves prophets, *i.e.* recipients of new revealed truths. Their faith was built up on the body of revealed truth, which was the common property of their age. Their peculiarity lay in the spiritual grasp which they possessed of the truths of their religion, and in the circumstances which brought them face to face with the mystery in their own lives, and compelled them to seek for some answer. Thus the advance is only indirectly due to Revelation. The second line of advance on the old beliefs comes directly through the prophets as involved in the revelations supernaturally made known to them. Let us consider each of these separately.

(1) To those Israelites who pondered on the mysteries of life, or were made to feel them, two difficulties especially presented themselves and demanded an answer which the popular doctrine of Sheol did not satisfy. The first

[1] This leaves aside the question whether Ecclesiastes represents a survival of, or a reversion to, the old popular belief.

difficulty arose from the consideration of the Divine government of the world. Revelation taught them to believe that God overruled all the events of their lives according to a law of perfect justice. Happiness was the reward of goodness, suffering was the punishment of sin. But, if this life is the only scene of the Divine Judgments, the good man should always be the happiest, and the wicked man the most miserable. This plainly was not always the case. How was this? At first the explanation was offered that the sufferings of the good man were only a temporary trial of his faith and would be followed by redoubled prosperity. But then it was seen that this too was not always the case. The just man sometimes died without seeing an end of his affliction. This is the difficulty with which Job wrestles. He does not think of denying that God rules the world or that He is an absolutely just ruler. But although he grows in the acknowledgment of his own sinfulness as his sufferings increase, he cannot feel that in proportion to other men's deserts he has deserved so bitter a punishment. The conviction is strong within him that the suffering must end shortly and a new era of peace and prosperity set in for him. But he despairs of life; death is close at hand. Where then, if not in this world, can the justice of God be manifested? Can it be after death? At first the thought is only suggested to be set aside at once (xiv. 13 ff.) Oh that God might hide him in Sheol till His wrath was past, and then bring Him back to life! (verse 13). But after death there is no coming back to life again (verse 14). In chap. xix., however, the thought comes back again, and this time with the strength of conviction. He sees no hope of earthly recovery. Death stares him in the face. So his mind turns to the sequel. What will happen after his death? First (xix. 25, 26) his name and his memory will be cleared from all suspicion

of guiltiness.[1] God, his Redeemer (R.V. Margin, 'Vindicator'—the 'Avenger of Blood,' whose duty it was to secure the punishment of a murderer), will vindicate his honour after his death, and prove his innocence. His 'name'—that 'name' so dear to a Hebrew—will not perish. But then, what of himself? He will die. The soul will be separated from the body: worms will destroy the body, and then what? Here, in the strength of his innocence, and his faith in the absolute justice of God, Job is lifted up for a moment above anything which Sheol could offer him. 'Out of (*i.e.* separated from) my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself . . . (vv. 26, 27) and not another.' Instead of going down to Sheol and being cut off from God for ever, he foresees himself after death standing before the presence of God restored and rewarded,[2] while his name and memory are vindicated on the earth. In this way does Job's faith triumph for a moment over the popular doctrine of Sheol. But alas! it is only for a moment. The thought is too new and bold to find a solid footing yet. It springs up as the issue of a sublime venture of faith, but then it dies down again. There is no further reference to it in the rest of the book. The old darkness which was lifted for a moment falls upon him once more. And it is to be noted the Book of Job finally closes with his restoration to increased prosperity (xlii. 10); *i.e.* the writer has to find comfort after all in the old idea that the sufferings of the righteous man are only temporary, and that the final restoration must take place in this life. The thought of a blessed life to come after death, which

[1] For a closer exposition of this passage, the reader may refer to Gibson, *Commentary on the Book of Job*, ad loc., or A. B. Davidson, *Job* (Cambridge Bible for Schools).

[2] 'To "see God" is to see Him reconciled and in peace; for this is implied in seeing Him at all, because He now hides away His face' (Davidson on Job. xix. 26).

supplies for us the most consoling answer to the mystery presented in the Book of Job, appears in that book only as a momentary vision which passes away and does not return.

The second difficulty which the pious Israelite found in the popular doctrine of Sheol arose from his refusal to be satisfied with regarding death as the breaking off of communion with God. With the growth of years he felt the spiritual life taking deeper root in him as his communion with God became closer and more real. But there was always promise of still more to come—more growth in the spirit of trust and prayer, deeper sense of the blessedness of loving and being loved by his God. Then, just when he was beginning to realise this most intensely, there came the thought or perhaps the shadow of death. Was all to come to an end with his last breath? That life with God, on earth always imperfect, yet with such fair promise of what might be, was it to be broken off short and come to nothing? Would God desert him after death? No; the thought was not to be endured. He might go down to Sheol, but Sheol could not be the end. So the 49th Psalm urges:—'[The wicked] are appointed as a flock for Sheol . . . But the righteous shall have dominion over them in the morning. . . . But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol: for He shall receive me' (vv. 14, 15). After the night of Sheol, the morning of deliverance will break; cp. Ps. xvii. 15: 'As for me I shall behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, *when I awake*, with Thy likeness.' In other places the belief that communion with God cannot be destroyed by death is so strong that Sheol is overlooked altogether, and vanishes from the picture of the future: 'Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and *afterward receive me to glory*. . . . My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart and

my portion for ever' (Ps. lxxiii. 24, 26). The sight of God and the enjoyment of His gifts is 'for evermore' (Ps. xvi. 11).[1] Death and Sheol fade away before the certainty of continued communion with God. 'To the wise the way of life goeth upward that he may depart from Sheol beneath' (Prov. xv. 24).

So far did the individual Israelite, unaided by special direct revelation, succeed in breaking through the doctrine of Sheol. The result was not the outcome of philosophical reasoning or speculation, but simply due to the strength of religious convictions battling against a teaching which could not be made to harmonise with the revealed truth on which the convictions were based. Thus the Israelite from time to time caught glimpses of a future life better than Sheol. But there was no authoritative teaching to back him up. The vision remained only his own. It did not spread to those about him: even in himself it came and went: it was confined to a few rare moments of heightened faith.

(2) We turn now to the other side of the Old Testament advance beyond the doctrine of Sheol. How far did the Revelation granted to Israel through the prophets, or in any other way, bear upon and influence their beliefs respecting the dead? The answer may be partly inferred from what has been said before. If much had been revealed and acknowledged as revealed concerning the state of the dead, the pious Israelite would not have had to fight the bitter struggle of protest against the

[1] The well-known verse, Ps. xvi. 10, is translated in the R.V.: 'Thou wilt not leave my soul *to* (not "in") Sheol,' *i.e.* 'Thou wilt not deliver me over to Sheol.' Thus the verse becomes equivalent in meaning to Ps. cxviii. 17: 'I shall not die, but live,' in its expression of the certainty that present afflictions will not end in death. Thus interpreted the verse cannot be made in the original intention of the Psalmist to support the idea of a Resurrection from Sheol.

doctrine of Sheol. A very definite contribution to the knowledge of the future life did indeed come through the prophets. But it came comparatively late in the history of prophecy: and, even so, it came only incidentally, not as belonging to the main stream of the prophetic teaching.

It was in connection with the great prophecies of Israel's punishment and restoration that the question of the life of the individual beyond the grave came within the range of the prophets' teaching. From Amos, the earliest of the written prophets, down to the Exile, a great part of the prophets' message was devoted to the denunciation of national sins and the prediction of terrible punishment. At length the blow fell. In 722 B.C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel, or Ephraim, was destroyed and its inhabitants deported by the Assyrians. In 597 and 586 B.C. Jerusalem was destroyed, the kingdom of Judah broken up and its inhabitants carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Thus came the judgment demanded by the righteousness of God. But the prophets did not stop with this prediction. They go on to say that because of the faithful few still left among the people, for His servant David's sake, and for His covenant's sake, God would not suffer the punishment of the guilty nation to end in complete destruction. During the exile this side of the prophets' teaching becomes more prominent. They are bidden to speak words of comfort (Isa. xl. 1). Israel, whose very existence as a nation seemed extinguished, should be raised again to life and restored to its own land. The dead nation brought back to life—what more natural figure could be used to describe this, than that of a Resurrection? Already before the exile Hosea (vi. 2) had prophesied the Restoration under the figure of a national Resurrection. During the exile, Ezekiel takes up the same figure and works it out more fully. In the

vision of chap. xxxvii. 1-14, the dry bones come together, bone to his bone: they are clothed with flesh: the breath of life is breathed into them: they live again. And the prophet is told (verse 11 ff.): 'Son of Man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. . . . Behold I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people: and I will bring you into the land of Israel.' As yet, however, the Resurrection is figurative. It is only an imaginative and poetical way of foretelling the restoration of Israel to national life and prosperity: all thought of the individual is merged in the thought of the community. The individual Jew at the time would not have seen in this prophecy the promise to himself in particular of a resurrection after death. But, incidentally, the very fact that the national restoration was expressed by the prophet under the figure of a resurrection of individual members of the nation would suggest the possibility of a resurrection of the individual, and familiarise men's minds with this thought. Let us remember, also, that during this same time of stress and trouble pious minds were feeling after some means of escape from the doctrine of Sheol, such as the hope of a Resurrection would afford. The faithful Jew was told that his nation would be restored. The message came to him in the form that its dead members should live again. What wonder, then, if he and others of that faithful remnant came to believe that should he die with his faith unrewarded before the restoration came, yet even after death his faith would at last be rewarded, that he himself would be raised to life again to be a partaker in that new and glorious Israel, pardoned, purified, restored, beloved of God, the light of the Gentiles. It is only one step further than Ezekiel when the prophet of Isaiah xxvi. 19 describes the Restoration as the return of the dead Israelites from the land of Sheol. 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for . . . the

earth shall cast forth the dead.' It is true the thought is still the Resurrection of the nation: the promise to the individual Israelite is still only secondary. But these words gave further support to the yearning hope of the individual that not only might Israel be restored, but also *he* might be brought back from Sheol to life to witness and share in the restoration. In this way, as far as we can see, arose first the hope, then the belief in an individual Resurrection of the dead from Sheol. Let us pass over some centuries and come to the Book of Daniel.[1] Here we find the Resurrection of individual members of the nation expressed as a certainty. 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Dan. xii. 2).

It will be noticed that in all the passages quoted above, the Resurrection is tacitly or expressly confined to Israel. The Gentiles are never included in the hope. In Isa. xxvi. 14 ('they are deceased, they shall not rise') they are expressly excluded—cp. also Jer. li. 39. And indeed within the limits of Israel the hope is at first held out only to the little remnant of the faithful. The promise is valid for the individual in so far only as he is a true Israelite. It is not until the Book of Daniel (xii. 2) that the Resurrection of the wicked in Israel is mentioned, and then it is a resurrection for the purpose of punishment. In this last passage there is apparently a distinction between three classes. The promise of Resurrection is not made to all Israelites. This is implied in the word 'many.' It applies only to the very good (*i.e.* especially the martyrs in the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes), who rise again to everlasting life, and to the very bad (*i.e.* the apostates in the same persecution), who rise again to shame and

[1] Written probably about the year 165 B.C. See Driver, *Daniel*, pp. xlvii. ff. (Cambridge Bible for Schools).

everlasting contempt. Between these two extremes we must suppose there is a middle class, who escape the Resurrection to punishment while they are denied the hope of Resurrection to life. Their fate is to remain in Sheol. Thus at its highest point in the Old Testament the promise of a Resurrection is limited: it is granted to some, it is not granted to others. But even this is a very important advance on the old doctrine of Sheol. It grasps the truth that there are distinctions among men after death, and that these distinctions are determined by the past life upon earth. It is only one step further to the idea of a Judge and a formal judgment passed upon the earthly life. In this way the Divine distribution of rewards and punishments, which the older Hebrew belief regarded as confined to this life, is extended to the life beyond the grave. And so the prophetic teaching led on to the belief in a Resurrection, though not a universal Resurrection, and in a Judgment to come.

Here the teaching of the Old Testament comes to a stop. Reviewing it as a whole, we cannot help being struck by its well-marked limitations. The Resurrection of the individual does not become a clearly conceived hope until the time of the Book of Daniel. The thought of Judgment after death is, at the most, implied rather than expressed in direct language. Job would have grasped at such a promise of deliverance from his troubles, if the Judgment after death had been an acknowledged part of Jewish belief. The saints grew indeed in the expectation that God had something better in store for them than the doctrine of Sheol could offer them. But this was only their own personal individual expectation. It was not a conviction established and assured by a direct revelation from God to a prophet. It was not the common property of the Jewish nation. On the mass of the people the gloom

of Sheol rested like a cloud. Ecclesiastes, one of the latest writers in the Old Testament,[1] shows that he has heard of better things, but cannot find any authority to prove to him that such good tidings are true. 'Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward?' (iii. 21). As late as our Lord's time the Sadducees taught that there was 'no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit' (Acts xxiii. 8, cp. Matt. xxii. 23, Mark xii. 18, Luke xx. 27).

Many people may, perhaps, have been puzzled by these facts. We may indeed, in all reverence, ask why the Old Testament Revelation should have included so little teaching on so great a subject? Why did not God speak to His people in plain words which all could understand, before which the old heathen ideas of Sheol would have vanished like darkness before the sun? Why was the people, to whom He chose to reveal Himself in a unique way, allowed to remain in this ignorance, while other nations (*e.g.* the Egyptians, their near neighbours), had a clear belief in a Judgment and a Resurrection? The answer to these questions is to be sought in the study of the working of God in Revelation generally. The Bible shows us that He works upon a plan in Revelation as in Nature. He has His times, His ways, His measures in making known the secrets of the unseen world. One truth, which especially concerns us here, is this: there is a gradual progress in Revelation. The Jews were not told the whole truth all at once, but portion by portion; as they were able to bear it, and according to their need, their knowledge was increased. They were led on step by step. We can trace many of the steps in the development of their religion. Their know-

[1] His book was probably written about the year 200 B.C. For his own beliefs about the dead, see iii. 19, 20; ix. 5, 6, 10; xii. 7. It is not probable that the 'judgment' to which he refers (iii. 17; viii. 6; xi. 9; xii. 13, 14) extends in its working beyond the earthly life.

ledge of the things of God grew by stages, like the stages of growth in ordinary human knowledge.[1] At each stage just so much was made known to them by Inspiration from God as He saw to be necessary for their progress to the next stage. Where He was silent we may be sure there was a purpose in His silence. And when we read books such as Job and Ecclesiastes we can perceive a reason for this silence as regards the life after death. It was the means of drawing out the most glorious examples of that central principle of religion, faith in God. If Job had known for certain on the authority of Revelation that there was a judgment and a reward after death, his faith would have been tried only in the way of willingness to endure present trouble in the sure hope of future recompense. Room would have been left for a faith which after all was not purely disinterested. Satan could still have said, 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' But in the absence of such knowledge the trial of Job was the test whether he would believe in God when he saw no hope of recompense for his troubles either in this world or in Sheol. What more searching test can be imagined? Yet Job stood firm: 'Though He slay me, yet will I wait for Him' (xiii. 15). By the very strength of his faith he rose for a moment to the vision of a reward after death; but he did not start from this idea. His faith led him to the vision, but it was not based upon the vision. The trial of Job thus issued in a supreme victory of faith. Job committing his soul to God blindly, unreservedly, under such a fiery temptation, is one of the greatest examples of human heroism. Mankind is honoured and enriched by such a man. May it not have been part of the Divine purpose, in revealing so little about the Future Life, to make the way for such a triumph as this?

[1] See Sanday, *Inspiration*, pp. 417 ff.

CHAPTER II

JEWISH BELIEF IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

The period between the close of the Old Testament and the coming of our Lord (*i.e.* roughly speaking, the last two centuries B.C.) is of very great importance in the history of thought and belief about the Future Life. We must therefore touch, if only briefly, on this part of the subject.

Quite at the beginning of this period the Jews were already conscious that the gift of prophecy had passed away or was at least suspended for a time. Most of the books of the Old Testament—it might be said all the most important books, with the exception, perhaps, of the Book of Daniel—had been by this time marked off from other books as being more sacred, and having more authority. In other words, the Canon of the Old Testament (*i.e.* the list of books which made up the Jewish Bible) was already in existence, and almost in its present form. The importance of this fact was very great. The Jew looked back to the Canonical Books as the authority for all that he believed. And so the teaching of this period is professedly based on the Old Testament. Wherever it goes beyond the Old Testament, it professes to do so only on the plea that the teaching put forward is found in the germ or implied in the Old Testament itself.

It might be thought that under such conditions there would have been no great advance on the Old Testament

teaching. But this was not the case. The Jews were limited, indeed, to interpretation, but the word 'interpretation,' in an uncritical age, can be made to cover a very wide area. So the 'interpretation' which took for its subject the prophetical and didactic books of the Old Testament[1] included not only a very free handling of the original meaning, by means of which the interpreter could put much of his own construction upon the written words, but also the interpolation of legends which became generally accepted as historical additions.[2] When the seed sown in the Old Testament was set to spring up in a soil like this, the growth was naturally rank and wild. Good corn grew up, but weeds sprang up along with it. Especially was this the case with regard to the subject of the Future Life. About this time also the popularity of a new class of literature, known as *apocalyptic*, led still further to abundance of speculation and discussion on the same subject. Men were anxiously looking for the fulfilment of the great promises made through the old Prophets. Since it did not seem possible that this fulfilment could take place so long as the present order of things lasted, the apocalyptic writers looked for the realisation of their hopes at the end of the world. According to their picture of the future, God would shortly intervene on behalf of Israel, the judgment and destruction of the Gentiles would follow, and the Messianic Kingdom would be established. Thus the apocalyptic literature directed men's minds to the thought of the Last Things, the Resurrection, the Final Judgment, Heaven, Gehenna; and, though in a lesser degree,

[1] As the Law has little or nothing to say about the Future Life, it is with the *Haggadic Midrash* (*i.e.* interpretation of the prophetical books) and not with the *Halachic Midrash* (*i.e.* interpretation of the Law) that we have to do.

[2] See Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in New Testament Times*, Div. ii. vol. i. sec. 25 (Eng. trans.).

to the thought of their departed kindred waiting like themselves, although on the other side of the grave, for the End.[1]

As soon as we turn from the Old Testament to the apocryphal and apocalyptic literature we find ourselves, as far as concerns our subject, in a very different atmosphere. The great truths of future retribution and the resurrection appear no longer as tentative ideas or uncertain hopes, but are widely accepted as undoubted certainties.[2] Only here and there are we reminded that the old doctrine of Sheol is still alive in some quarters.[3] Leaving aside, however, for the moment the differences between schools of Jewish thought, let us see, as far as we can discover, what was the probable belief of that party in the first century A.D. whose teaching on this subject came nearest to our Lord's teaching — the Pharisees of Palestine. They believed that the soul passed immediately after death to a place of waiting. Already in this intermediate state there was a distinction between the righteous and the wicked. The former are rewarded with a foretaste of their blessedness; sometimes they are spoken of as resting in Paradise. The wicked already begin to suffer torments. At the end of this age there will be a resurrection of the dead—limited, as it seems, to the righteous—in which a glorious body will be given to the soul for its home. Then will follow the final Judgment. Each man's actions are to be read aloud from the 'heavenly books' in which they are noted, and sentence is to be passed upon him. The righteous are taken into Paradise, the heavenly counterpart of the Garden of Eden. The wicked are cast into

[1] On apocalyptic literature generally, see Charles, article on Apocalyptic Literature, in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

[2] It should be remembered that the Book of Daniel belongs in point of time to this period.

[3] Notably in Ecclesiasticus (*c.* 180 B.C.) and Tobit (? second century B.C.).

Gehenna, there to be tortured for ever with unquenchable fire.[1]

From this brief account of the Pharisaic beliefs in the time of our Lord it will be seen at once how important was the period between the Old and the New Testaments. The expectation of rewards and punishments in the next life had by this time become one of the chief incentives to virtue and endurance. If we consider how much of this teaching was sanctioned by our Lord, we shall not refuse to acknowledge the Divine overruling in its development. But at the same time we must not overlook its inadequacies and its positive errors. First, it was lacking in authority. It did not claim to possess the authority of the original Inspiration. So far as it was true and demanded unhesitating acceptance, it professed to be based on the Old Testament. It was built up by working out and combining the hints and implications contained in the Canonical Scriptures. If this had been done on all sides in the spirit of simple truth-seeking, and with caution and reserve, there would have been more unanimity and greater authority in the conclusions reached. But the recognised principles of interpretation allowed and even invited all sorts of license, and it followed that each man's teaching received just as much respect as attached to his own personal reputation. His doctrines, true or false, had no authority behind them such as all men would accept.

[1] The belief in the everlastingness of the punishment is stated by Josephus to have been held by the Pharisees (*Wars*, II. viii, 14). There is, however, a statement credibly attributed to the famous Rabbi Akiba (*c.* 80-120 A.D.), that for the circumcised the punishment of Gehenna lasts only twelve months. The following points may be noticed:—(1) It is certain that Gehenna did not bear this sense in common use in our Lord's time, but indicated a place of *eternal* punishment; (2) it is very probable that the idea of a twelve months' punishment originated with R. Akiba; but (3) even in R. Akiba's teaching Gehenna was still the place of *eternal* punishment for all sinners except the circumcised Israelite.

The result was an extraordinary divergence of opinions. The Sadducees rejected all the new developments entirely. The Alexandrian Jews denied the Intermediate State and the Resurrection of the Body, and taught that the soul at death passed straight to its final reward or punishment. To take another example, the conceptions of the Resurrection were widely different from one another. There was no agreement on the questions whether it included Gentiles as well as Jews,[1] the wicked as well as the righteous; whether it was only a reawakening of the soul, or concerned the body as well; whether, in the latter case, the Resurrection body was different or not from the earthly body.[2]

Secondly, the Jewish pictures of the Last Judgment, Paradise, and Gehenna are full of fanciful extravagances of description and speculation.

Lastly, their whole teaching on the Future Life is warped by a narrow and mechanical conception of salvation. The Resurrection, wherever it is conceived as a blessed hope, is rigorously confined to the Jews. If the Gentile is granted a resurrection, it is only in order that he may be consigned to a place of greater misery than Sheol. On the other hand, we find the idea that the Jew, because he is circumcised, and a member of the chosen people, cannot be utterly and finally lost, however much he may have sinned. The fact and the teaching of the Incarnation were needed to break down the barriers of Jewish particularism and to overcome its narrowness.

In conclusion, then, we may sum up the results of the teaching in this period somewhat as follows. It took for

[1] Nearly all, however, excluded the Gentiles.

[2] The second book of Maccabees is remarkable for its peculiar attitude in regard to the state of the departed. It speaks of the departed (Onias and Jeremiah) interceding with God for their nation (xv. 12-14); and of sacrifices and prayers offered for the dead to secure atonement for their sin (xii. 40-45). It expresses the identity of the Resurrection body with the earthly body in the crudest and most uncompromising form (vii. 11, xiv. 46).

its starting-point certain salient features of the Old Testament revelation—the Messianic Kingdom, the hope of immortality based upon the relation between the soul and God, the expectation of future retribution resting on the conviction of the Divine justice. By pondering on these ideas it arrived at the thought of an Intermediate State, a Resurrection, a Last Judgment, a final reward or punishment. But even in regard to these main outlines it had no certainty and no uniformity; and when it came to further details it was fanciful, speculative, narrow, often unspiritual. So St. Paul, who had an intimate knowledge of the mind of the Jew without Christ, felt it to be true to say that it was 'Christ Jesus who abolished death and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel' (2 Tim. i. 10).[1] It was our Lord who 'brought to light' what was wavering and obscured in the Old Testament, when He made the relationship with God the ground of assurance in a personal immortality. 'He is not a God of the dead but of the living: for all live unto Him' (Mark xii. 27 = Matt. xxii. 32 = Luke xx. 38). His own Resurrection and Ascension were the final convincing proof of the truth of that which He brought to light in His teaching. He who took our human nature upon Himself, carried it with Him in His victory over death, rose again from the dead with it, bore it up to heaven in His Ascension. And we, who are joined to Him by our common human nature, and through the Sacraments, shall be made partakers of His Resurrection, and the life eternal (see 1 Cor. xv. 20 ff.).

We shall see then in the following chapters that our Lord confirms in their main outlines the Jewish (Pharisaic) beliefs, and adopts their phraseology (Paradise, Gehenna, etc.). But He enlarges the whole by the infusion of a higher spirit, and converts it from an unverified opinion into a sure and certain truth.

[1] See further a sermon on this text, entitled 'Growth of Belief in a Future State,' in Driver, *Sermons on the Old Testament*, pp. 72 ff.

PART II

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING

CHAPTER III

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE: PROGRESS AND PURIFICATION

It is our purpose now to deal in order with each of the chief features in the Christian conception of the Future Life, dividing our subject into (*a*) the Intermediate State; (*b*) the Resurrection; (*c*) the Last Judgment, and the Final Issues. On each of these subjects it will be our aim to state the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles, and to put to the test certain beliefs and practices professedly based upon the teaching of Scripture which have been current at various times in the Christian Church. The first in order of these subjects is naturally that which forms the title of this chapter—the Intermediate State. We close the eyes of our departed: we commit their bodies to the grave, 'dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life.'[1] But in the meanwhile where are they? Their souls are being kept in a state of waiting until the time comes for them to be

[1] Prayer of Committal from the 'Order for the Burial of the Dead.'

reunited with the body. That condition of waiting is called the Intermediate State. It is true that our Lord indeed is silent on this subject. When He says to the thief, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise' (Luke xxiii. 43); or to the disciples, 'I go to prepare a place for you' (John xiv. 2); when He speaks of Lazarus resting in Abraham's bosom, and of the rich man in Hades (Luke xvi. 22, 23), He does not hint at any further change still to come in their condition. Perhaps—although on this point nothing can be said with certainty—the words which He used, 'Paradise,' 'Hades' (=Sheol), would of themselves suggest to His hearers an intermediate rather than a final state.[1] But, although not expressly mentioned, such an intermediate state is distinctly implied in our Lord's words, for He speaks of 'the end of the world' (Matt. xiii. 39, xxviii. 20), of His own (second) 'coming' for the final judgment (Matt. xxv. 31 ff.), and of a Resurrection of the Body to take place at some future time (John v. 28, 29; see pp. 73-75). St. Paul speaks clearly of a time between death and the Last Day. With the near expectation of death before him (2 Tim. iv. 6) he speaks of entrusting his soul to God as a pledge to be claimed again on 'that day' (*ib.*, i. 12).[2] In the passage, 2 Cor. v. 1-10, death is called the 'putting off' (ἐκδύσασθαι, v. 4) of the earthly tabernacle, *i.e.* the body: the 'building from God' (v. 1), our 'habitation

[1] On the use of the words 'Paradise' and 'Hades' in Jewish literature of the first century B.C., see Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 234, 236; of the first century A.D., *ib.*, pp. 301. In the New Testament, wherever we can be sure on other grounds that the final place of punishment is meant, the word used is Gehenna, not Hades. Hades is used, on the other hand, of a temporary abode of the departed (see Acts ii. 31, Rev. xx. 13).

[2] The same word, 'to entrust as a pledge,' is used by our Lord on the cross (Luke xxiii. 46). Cp. also St. Stephen, 'Lord Jesus, *receive* my spirit' (Acts vii. 59).

which is from heaven' (v. 2), is the Resurrection body which is contrasted with the 'earthly tabernacle.' Between the putting off of the earthly body and the putting on of the heavenly there is an interval of time, in which the soul is 'absent from the body' (v. 8). Human nature shrinks from the putting off of the body, *i.e.* death. We would fain put on our Resurrection body without the pain of putting off the earthly body (v. 4), and of waiting 'absent from the body' for the day of Resurrection. But the Christian, says St. Paul, is of good courage, and willing rather to be 'absent from the body,' because then he will be 'at home with the Lord' (v. 8). This passage clearly contemplates an Intermediate State. The same thought of departed spirits waiting for a further consummation is expressed also in Rev. vi. 9-11, and in the well-known passages, 1 Peter iii. 19, 20; iv. 6 (see below, p. 32 ff.).

A very common biblical expression for the departed is 'they that sleep.' It is often found in the Old Testament, is used by our Lord of Lazarus (John xi. 11), and occurs frequently in St. Paul's writings (*e.g.* 1. Cor. xv. 51, 1. Thess. iv. 15), The expression is very ancient and is not confined to Jewish and Christian thought. Probably in its origin it was suggested by the resemblance of the dead body to a sleeping person. We cannot infer anything from its Christian use as to the state of the departed. There is nothing in the Christian teaching which leads us to suppose that the departed are in a state of unconsciousness or semi-unconsciousness. On the contrary, our Lord's promise to the penitent thief, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me,' and St. Paul's words, 'To depart and be with Christ' (Phil. i. 23; cp. 2 Cor. v. 8 quoted above), distinctly exclude the thought of any loss of consciousness such as is implied if the word 'sleep' is taken literally. The death of the righteous brings to

him the sense of nearer communion with Christ.[1] Far from involving a loss of consciousness, this must imply a quickened power of perception and appreciation in regard to spiritual things. To deny this would be to go back again to the old doctrine of Sheol from which the fuller Christian Revelation delivered us. But, although death opens instead of closing the eyes of the soul, we are nevertheless given to understand that there is still something lacking in the Intermediate State. The souls of the martyrs in Rev. vi. 9-11 are heard crying aloud, 'How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.[2] And there was given them to each one a white robe, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time.' They receive the reward of purity, but they are bidden to wait still for the full answer to their prayer. Similarly St. Paul speaks of the soul in the Intermediate State as 'unclothed,' 'absent from the body' (2 Cor. v. 3, 4, 8), words which imply its consciousness of something still lacking to its final perfection. Only at the Last Day, when soul and body both made glorious are reunited, comes the consummation of bliss in heaven. Meanwhile there is a time of waiting which is yet none the less a time of rest: a time of looking forward undisturbed by any anxiety or mistrust, until

[1] Article 40 of the 42 Articles of the Church of England (drawn up in 1553) condemned those 'which say that the souls of such as depart hence do sleep, being without all sense, feeling, or perceiving until the Day of Judgment.'

[2] It is a principle of interpretation to be applied to the whole book of Revelation that it refers not to individual men as such, but to personified principles of two great types, good and evil. These words are therefore not to be understood as a cry for revenge on particular persons, but as a prayer for the final subjugation and judgment of evil, and the consummation of the Kingdom of God with power (see Milligan, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, pp. 153-160).

that which is perfect shall come. And so St. Paul, when the time of his departure is at hand, fixes his eyes upon the Resurrection Day, and commends his soul into the hands of God as a pledge deposited with Him for sure keeping until the day comes for the final fulfilment of the promised glory.

It follows from some passages quoted above that already in the Intermediate State there are distinctions between the lot of the good and that of the bad. The divine law which is seen at work here on earth, the law which rewards goodness and punishes sin, continues to work in the life beyond. Of the fate of the wicked in the Intermediate State we are told very little. The rich man in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus is 'in torment.' The 2nd Epistle of St. Peter (ii. 9; cp. ii. 4, iii. 7, Jude 6) describes the wicked as 'kept under punishment unto the day of judgment.' On the other hand, the pardoned thief passes from earth to be with Christ in Paradise. St. Paul hopes 'to be with Christ' as soon as he departs this life. The word most frequently used to describe the present condition of the righteous dead is 'rest.' 'It was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little time' (Rev. vi. 11). 'They rest from their labours' (*ib.*, xiv. 13). The same thought is contained in our Lord's promise to the dying thief. To the poor tortured and thirsty sufferer the word Paradise (= the park or pleasure-grounds of an Oriental king) would bring up the thought of rest beneath shady trees on the banks of cool-flowing streams. Rest again is the chief thought when Lazarus is described as carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.[1] For those who have lived for Christ the fruition of His presence and of fellowship with Him is in itself perfect rest.

[1] I have not ventured to press the details of the story in this Parable except where they illustrate other parts of the New Testament.

But this rest is not the torpor of inaction. It promises peace, freedom from care or pain or weariness. But 'to be with Christ' means intense activity of soul; contemplation, meditation, worship, prayer and communion will all be called forth in higher measure. Nor again does rest necessarily imply the attainment of final perfection. The thought of perfect rest is quite consistent with the thought of progress—unbroken by failure, unclouded by fear of falling—toward that which is perfect. Not even the thought of human rebellion against God here on earth is allowed to break the peace of the saints in Paradise. The coming consummation of the Kingdom of God among men is already revealed to them. The reasons why sin is permitted to reign for a time are made known to them. So they are bidden to 'rest yet for a little time' (Rev. vi. 11).

So far we have been treading on ground which would be disputed nowadays by very few Christians of any shade of belief. It is true that the Book of Homilies of the Church in the Homily on Prayer, while denying the doctrines of Purgatory and of Prayer for the Dead, practically denies also an Intermediate State.[1] But the two last collects of the Burial Service as clearly imply an Intermediate State. And on this particular point few men to-day would be prepared to support the Homily in the face of the Prayer Book.[2] But there are further questions to which very different answers are given by different people. Are we to think that there is a spiritual growth, a progress of character in the departed in the Intermediate State? Is a second trial ever granted to any who have led sinful lives upon earth? Can the prayers

[1] 'Let us think that the soul of man passing out of the body goeth straightways either to heaven or else to hell' (Homily xix. part 3).

[2] See *e.g.* Archdn. Sinclair's *Points at Issue between the Church of England and the Church of Rome*, p. 76; C. H. H. Wright, *The Intermediate State*, p. 313, footnote.

of the living avail to help the departed? May we petition them to pray for us? It is to these questions that we must now turn and seek for an answer.

Progress after Death.—A man dies with penitent confession of his sins, and with faith in God, having received the last ministrations of the Church. We believe that he is saved. Yet up to the moment of his death he was still far from perfect. How are we to think of him in the Intermediate State? Is that 'perfecting, stablishing, strengthening' (1 Peter v. 10) completed in a moment, the moment of death, so that he enters into Paradise already perfect? Or is it a gradual process as growth in holiness is here upon earth, a going on 'from strength to strength'? The words of Heb. xii. 23, 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' are sometimes taken to imply the former. But these words are by no means conclusive. The New Testament often speaks as if that which God wills to do for us were already an accomplished thing. Christians are called 'saints' (=holy ones): St. Paul says to the Corinthians, 'Ye were washed (*i.e.* in baptism), ye were sanctified, ye were justified' (1 Cor. vi. 11.) So here the words 'made perfect' do not exclude the thought of a perfection gradually being brought about, but in the sight of God, to Whom the future is as open as the past, already an accomplished fact. This is the meaning in a similar passage (Heb. x. 14), 'by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' We must notice also, as bearing on xii. 23, that in xi. 40 it is said 'that they (*i.e.* the departed) without us should not be made perfect.' (See Westcott, *Hebrews*, *ad loc.*)

There are many considerations, on the other hand, which suggest a gradual process rather than an instantaneous perfection. The building up of character in this life is a slow and gradual work. Faith penetrates gradually into a man's whole being, day by day spreading more

widely and settling more deeply into his motives. The perfect Christian character does not burst out into full flower in a moment. Men who, as far as we know, are saved, depart from this life at very different stages of this growth in holiness. There are others who have led evil lives but are drawn to a sincere repentance at the last hour. Differences of the widest kind are found in the moral and spiritual character of men lying at death's door. Some are among the holiest of God's saints. Others plunged in ignorance almost as deep as heathenism, though they have lived up to their lights, are only babes in the spiritual life. A place will be found in the Kingdom of God, we trust, for them also. But does the mere fact of dying make all these equally perfect, in a moment? It is true 'the Blood of Jesus . . . cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John i. 7). The guilt, and the condemnation of the guilt, are removed. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. viii. 1). It is true that His grace working in the soul is all-powerful. It may be true also that the soul, freed from the gross earthly body, springs upwards with more rapid flight. But that this growth of a character 'unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,' will be accomplished in a moment by death without our co-operation, is not only contrary to the analogy of our present spiritual life but also a denial of human freedom.[1] No true moral or spiritual change can take place in ourselves, unless our own will consents and works in harmony with the grace of God. We should expect then to find in Holy Scripture some hint of a growth

[1] Even a writer sternly opposed to Prayers for the Dead like Dr. C. H. H. Wright is constrained to admit 'the possibility of believers being more fully trained or "educated" in holiness in the life beyond the grave' (*The Intermediate State*, p. 194).

in spiritual life beyond the grave—the soul 'growing to match' with the nearer and clearer sight of truth revealed to it, growing more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. It is possible we have some such thought in St. Paul's hope for the Philippians, 'that He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ' (Phil. i. 6); cp. the similar expressions in 1 Cor. i. 8, 1 Thess. v. 23. But we cannot say this with any confidence because St. Paul expected 'the day of Jesus Christ' (*i.e.* of His coming) to take place within a few years, and so he is probably thinking only of the life here on earth. But we may turn with more confidence to two passages in 1 Peter, viz. ch. iii. 18-20—(Christ) 'being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit: in which also He went and *preached unto the spirits in prison*, which aforetime were disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah'; and ch. iv. 5-6, 'who shall give an account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. *For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*' These words were universally understood during the first four centuries of the Christian Church to mean that our Lord in the time between His Death and His Resurrection visited the souls waiting in Hades and preached to them His Gospel. St. Augustine first declined to understand the passages as a reference to our Lord's descent into Hades on the grounds that they seemed to him, on this interpretation, to grant the possibility of salvation to the unbaptized. But the greater number of scholars of all shades of thought and belief agree in regarding the words as a reference to the Descent into Hades.[1]

See Appendix, p. 123.

What teaching do these two passages offer us, if we adopt the above interpretation? They speak of the 'dead' (iv. 6), the 'spirits in prison' (iii. 19), being visited by our Lord in the spirit after His earthly death, in order that He might preach to them His Gospel. As iv. 6 is written with a direct reference to iii. 19, 20, in all probability the same persons are present to the writer's mind in both passages, viz. those who 'aforetime were disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah' (iii. 20). The purpose of the preaching is stated in iv. 6, 'that they might live according to God in the spirit,' *i.e.* that they might be partakers of the true and eternal life—that life of communion with God, which, as the Old Testament saints trusted and our Lord affirmed, has in itself the guarantee of immortality—the life which is rather quickened than destroyed by the death of the flesh (cp. iii. 18).

But this train of thought confronts us at once with a very serious question. Are we to think that those disobedient ones had been condemned on the ground of their earthly life and placed amongst the lost, but that by the preaching of Christ another opportunity was offered to them of repentance, faith, salvation? Does St. Peter teach that some of the lost were allowed a second probation after death? And if some, why not others? On this question a reference to the general teaching of the New Testament gives a decisive answer. The idea of a probation after death is nowhere even raised in the whole Bible. On the other hand, wherever the Last Judgment is mentioned, it is upon the earthly life only that the examination is made and the sentence is passed. In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats the sole ground of the judgment of eternal reward or eternal punishment is the actions of the earthly life (Matt. xxv. 31-46). Our Lord's teaching in other places is equally unmistakable.

'Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words *in this sinful and adulterous generation*, the Son of Man shall be ashamed of him when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels' (Mark viii. 38; cp. Matt. xvi. 27). 'What shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life?' (Matt. xvi. 26). These passages show that this life, and this life only, is the arena in which the eternal life is lost or won. If we turn to other parts of the New Testament we find the same truth asserted. 'We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ: that each one may receive *the things done in the body*' (2 Cor. v. 10). 'It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this cometh judgment' (Heb. ix. 27; cp. Rev. xx. 13).

It cannot be said, then, that the New Testament gives any countenance to the idea of a second probation. And indeed those who plead for the belief in a probation after death generally take care not to call it a 'second' probation, but a probation granted to those 'who have had no true probation in this life.' But, even when expressed in this form, the assertion of a probation after death cannot be maintained against the passages quoted above, for they imply that each one *has* had in this life a true probation, and is judged by it. The difficulty really arises from a mistaken idea of probation. If all men are to be judged at the Last Judgment by the same standard, and that the standard of the full Christian faith, then it might truly be said that vast numbers of men have had no true probation in this life. But, as we shall see below (p. 92), while we are warned again and again that the Final Judgment is passed upon the earthly life, we are also reminded that the life of each man will be judged by its own proper standard. The Alljust and Omniscient Judge will know how to assign to each human being, Christian or pagan, learned or ignorant, his exact

measure of responsibility for all that he has done or become: and that measure, infinitely varied according to the gifts of each man, the surroundings and circumstances of his life, and his use of his opportunities, will result in an infinite variety of standards of judgment. Even those who seem in the eyes of men to have no responsibility at all—infants and lunatics—may have in the sight of God a just standard by which they may be judged. What remains fast is this: that each man judged by the proper standard which exact and perfect Justice assigns to him, will stand or fall, be accepted or rejected on the ground of his earthly life. We can find no warrant in revelation for believing in a probation after death. If there be such a probation for any one whomsoever, it has not been the will of God to tell us of it. And so it is not likely that St. Peter is here setting forth a new doctrine by implying that these 'disobedient' ones who perished in the Flood were granted a second probation by the preaching of the Gospel in Hades. In what sense then are the two passages to be understood?

In order to give what seems the most satisfactory explanation of this difficulty we must anticipate something of which we shall have occasion to speak again (see p. 88 ff.). The Final Judgment of the Last Day is the climax of a series of judgments. It is preceded by earlier judgments which declare themselves here on earth. The Christians as well as the Jews included among the Divine judgments manifested on earth certain great catastrophes which they regarded as declarations of the wrath of God. Such were the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans in 70 A.D., and especially, greatest in extent, most terror-striking of all, the Flood. But, in judgments like these, many thousands suffered alike: and even if they were all 'disobedient,' yet the degree of guiltiness was

not the same in each case of disobedience. It would vary in each with the measure of responsibility, from the state of the man grown old in conscious and deliberate sin to that of the child who knew not his right hand from his left. Yet all alike, as far as this life is concerned, were involved in one common doom. Could it remain so in the next world? On this subject our Lord let fall some very significant words: 'If the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee (*i.e.* Capernaum), it would have remained until this day. Howbeit I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee' (Matt. xi. 23, 24). We notice here two points: (1) The temporal judgment by which Sodom was destroyed is to be succeeded by another judgment in the Day of Judgment; (2) in that last judgment Capernaum, measured by its opportunities, will be judged by a higher standard and condemned with a heavier condemnation than Sodom. May we not believe on the strength of these words that even in Sodom there were some who had sinned indeed, but were not rejected for ever; and in the same way as concerns *some* at least of the disobedient ones overtaken in the days of Noah by the common destruction of the Flood, may we not venture to think that their measure of guilt was not such as to involve them in the final and eternal condemnation to be pronounced at the Last Day? More than this we dare not say: God is the Judge, not we. The incidental and allusive way in which St. Peter refers to the Descent into Hades in these two passages (1 Peter iii. 19, 20; iv. 6) suggests that he counted on his hearers' familiarity with the subject. It may be that our Lord Himself after His Resurrection, when speaking of His work in Hades, had thus reminded the disciples that some even among those who were accounted 'sinners above all men' had found mercy and forgiveness, were

being led onwards in their time of waiting by the news of the Gospel preached to them also.

If this train of thought has not led us astray, we may express the meaning of the two passages somewhat as follows:—'Christ went in the spirit (*i.e.* between His death and His Resurrection) and preached to the dead in "prison" (a current Jewish way of describing the Intermediate State, derived probably from the old idea of Sheol, the place from whence there is no escape), preached even to those who were disobedient once (ποτέ, ὅτε), while the long-suffering of God was waiting on and on (ἀπεξεδέχετο) and the ark was building: preached to them in order that they who once were judged and punished as men in the flesh, *i.e.* their earthly life (κατ' ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ) might yet in the Last Judgment (to which reference is made in iv. 5) be found worthy to "live according to God" (*i.e.* enter into eternal life) in the spirit.'[1] They had been cut off in a state of imperfection, yet though punished they had not been rejected. Rather they had found forgiveness and acceptance, and now while they are waiting in Hades the Gospel is preached to them, that they may grow in fitness for the eternal life and the full vision of God. And, if so, the idea is here shadowed forth that the condition of the Blessed departed in the Intermediate State is one of progress from the relative imperfectness of their earthly life and character towards the perfect 'life according to God' to which they will at last be called. This thought is nowhere contradicted, either expressly or by implication, in the New Testament. It is not out of harmony with any other truths that may be inferred from

[1] An interesting parallel both in thought and language to this passage is to be seen in 1 Cor. v. 5, where St. Paul says of the incestuous man 'to deliver such a one unto Satan for the *destruction of the flesh* that the *spirit may be saved* in the day of the Lord Jesus.'

the revealed truths. Further than this, it is suggested and confirmed by our knowledge of God's way of dealing with men here as we learn it from Revelation and from observation of life. And, lastly, although we should not venture to build upon the passages above treated, nevertheless they seem to give a higher sanction to this belief.

Purification after Death.—We have dealt with this question at some length because of its relation to certain other questions which are much discussed at the present time, viz. the belief in a Purgatory, and the practices of Prayer for the Departed, and of Invocation of Saints.

The word *Purgatory* has an evil sound to English ears on account of the abuses which grew up in connection with the belief in it during the Middle Ages. It was owing to these abuses that the Church of England in her Thirty-nine Articles of 1563 declared (Art. XXII.) 'that the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory . . . is a fond thing, vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.' It is very important, however, if we would understand this article, to bear in mind what was meant by the '*Romish* doctrine of Purgatory.' The corresponding Latin words are *doctrina Romanensium de Purgatorio* (the doctrine of the *Romanensians* concerning Purgatory). The word *Romanensian*[1] or *Romish* is not to be taken as if it meant the teaching of the Roman Church as defined by the Council of Trent. It means the current teaching of the Roman party as the Reformers had known it with its attendant abuses. So our Twenty-second article must not be taken as condemning any and every doctrine of Purgatory. It is not a denial of any purification of the soul after death, but only of the kind of purification implied in the Romanensian

[1] See Dixon, *History of the Church of England*, vol. iv. pp. 734 ff.

doctrine of Purgatory. According to the 'Romish' doctrine all those who died in a state of penitence but without having performed penance for venial sins, were punished after death for these sins by temporal torments in the place called Purgatory. Burning by fire was the form in which the punishment was generally conceived. It was taught that this punishment, so long as it lasted, was not less in the degree of its intensity than the torments of Hell, from which it differed in nothing except in being temporary instead of eternal. The length of time to be spent in Purgatory by each soul was determined by the amount of the sin for which it had not performed penance before death. This time could, however, be shortened by the prayers of the living, and especially by the offering of Masses on behalf of the soul in Purgatory. It was in connection with this last belief that the greatest abuses sprung into existence. The whole teaching of Purgatory by the 'Romish' party was based on a degrading mechanical theory of quantitative compensation. So much sin meant so many years in Purgatory. The greater the number of Masses offered for the departed one, the sooner could his release be obtained. A multitude of Mass-priests sprung up who made a living by trading on the popular superstition. The scandal caused by the sale of Indulgences was also connected with this degraded doctrine of Purgatory. The 'Indulgence,' it was taught, might be applied to shorten the time of future detention in Purgatory for the living, but was also available *per modum suffragii* (*i.e.* through the prayers of the Church) to hasten the release of the dead already lying in Purgatory. The existence of these corruptions was admitted by the Roman Church itself in its *Decretum de Purgatorio* at the twenty-fifth Session of the Council of Trent. In declaring the 'sound doctrine concerning Purgatory

handed down by the holy Fathers and the sacred Council,' the Council made the following restrictions :—

1. The existence of a Purgatory was affirmed, but no definition was given of its nature. Thus the Church of Rome has not authoritatively prescribed any obligatory belief in Purgatory beyond the statement that some souls undergo a purification in the Intermediate State (see Möhler, *Symbolism*, Eng. trans., ii. 138, 139).

2. It was forbidden to deal in popular teaching with the more difficult and subtle questions, and such as do not make for edification : or to discuss publicly anything uncertain or open to the charge of error : or to treat at all of matters which appeal only to curiosity or superstition.

3. All savour of filthy lucre is to be removed. Bishops are to see that Masses provided for by legacies or other means are carefully and reverently performed.

4. In the Decree concerning Indulgences passed in the same Session xxv., the abuses connected with the sale of Pardons are condemned and prohibited.

It will thus be seen that in this as in other points the Council of Trent attempted to effect a Reformation within the Roman Church itself. The decree on Purgatory at the twenty-fifth Session of the Council of Trent is aimed against the same abuses which our Twenty-second article condemns. But it is quite certain that our article was not directed against this decree of the Council of Trent, because the decree of the Council was not passed until December 3, 1563, while the Thirty-nine Articles had been already published some months earlier.

The Roman position, then, as strictly and authoritatively stated, refrains from giving any kind of definition to the word, but declares that a Purgatory, a place and process of purification of the soul after death, is to be

believed by all men.[1] Is this a defensible position or not? Can the belief in a Purgatory be so established beyond dispute from the teaching of Holy Scripture as interpreted by the primitive Church as to demand acceptance from all Christians? The answer must be given in the negative. There are, indeed, passages in the Bible which may fairly be said on their most natural interpretation to support the doctrine of a purification of the soul between death and the final judgment (see the passages quoted and discussed on p. 42 ff.). But there is no passage which states it so clearly as to prove it with certainty. And when we turn to the teaching of the early Church, there are clear proofs that this belief dates from very early times as a private opinion but not as a binding article of faith. Thus St. Augustine (354-430) says in his *City of God* (Book xxi. ch. xxvi.), 'That such worldliness, being venial, shall be consumed in the fire of tribulation either hereafter[2] only, or here and hereafter both, or here that it may not be hereafter—this *I do not contradict, because possibly it is true*' (vol. ii. p. 463, Eng. trans., T. and T. Clark, 1871). St. Augustine could not conceivably have written in this way if the doctrine, of which he speaks, had been recognised as a necessary part of the Christian Creed. As a matter of fact, the first semblance of authority that attached to the doctrine was given to it by Pope Gregory I. (590-604), and it was not formally and authoritatively declared to be a matter of binding belief in the Western Church before the

[1] This is taking the Roman teaching at its minimum. But the *Catechism* put forth by the same Council, the authority of which, though not on a level with that of the Decrees, is naturally very great, speaks of a 'purgatorial fire' in which the souls are 'tortured.' And it is to be noted in this as in many other points of the Roman system of doctrine that the teaching popularly delivered as authoritative even by those in very high positions has generally gone far beyond the Council and fallen into extravagances and superstitions.

[2] Not 'here' as wrongly translated.

Council of Florence in 1439. Up to this time it was a general opinion—universally held, it may be, and sanctioned by so authoritative a name as Pope Gregory the Great—but still a general opinion only, not officially declared to be a part of the Catholic Faith.[1]

Thus the Roman Church has no warrant to *compel her children to accept any doctrine of Purgatory* as an article of faith. It cannot be maintained that either Holy Scripture or the Apostolic tradition as embodied in the witness and teaching of the early Fathers speaks in such a way as to give the Church a mandate to say to Her members, 'You are obliged to accept this as part of the Christian Creed.' But in saying this we must not be understood to deny that there is a truth in the belief in a place and a process of purification hereafter for those who depart this life accepted but still imperfect. When we ask the question whether we *may* hold such a belief as harmonising with the teaching of Holy Scripture or Apostolic tradition, or general reasonableness, we pass into a different atmosphere. Let us see what may be gathered from these three sources.

I. The Teaching of Holy Scripture and the Witness of Reason.—We have seen that the descriptions of the Intermediate State in the New Testament dwell especially on two ideas—nearness to Christ, and rest. But there are other passages which suggest a different train of ideas. Thus, *e.g.*, Rev. xxi. 27 says of the New Jerusalem, 'there shall in no wise enter into it any thing unclean'; our Lord says it is the pure in heart who 'shall see God,' Matt. v. 8: and our own conscience brings home to us the same thought. They who are admitted on the Day of Judgment to the full blessedness of heaven must be purged not only from the

[1] On the history of the Doctrine of Purgatory, see Tract 79 of the *Tracts for the Times*.

guilt of all past sins but also from the marks which those sins have imprinted upon the character of the soul. Of thousands who depart this life, we may say with joy that they have 'washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb' by repentance, faith, and confession of sin. 'The guilt and the condemnation are removed.'[1] But beyond the guilt incurred by the sinner, there is another effect which comes from sin—the sinful acts leave their mark on the character of the sinner, by weakening it and also by tainting it. It is further a matter of daily experience that the removal of guilt in the forgiveness of sin does not remove the effect of the sin upon the character any more than it delivers the sinner from any other of the natural consequences of his sin. The penitent drunkard is forgiven; but the weakness and taint deeply imprinted in the character by years of self-indulgence are not thereby in a moment removed any more than the shattered health is in a moment restored. Nor, as we have seen (p. 31), can death be regarded as having the power in itself to remove them. Accordingly, just the same thoughts, which led us to recognise the probability of a positive growth in strength of character after death, lead us now to the same conclusion as regards the purging away of weakness and taints of character. These two, in fact, the strengthening and the purging of the soul, are only two aspects of the same process. As the soul acquires a stronger hold on the good elements of character, she delivers herself more completely from the bad elements. As she grows in self-mastery, self-sacrifice, and devotion to God, so self-indulgence in all its forms grows less in her. But neither the one nor the other can take place except by the action of her own will. By her own voluntary acts and by her own

[1] See p. 31 and the passage, Rom. viii. 1, there quoted.

self-imposed sufferings (made possible for her, it is true, by the grace of God) must she disentangle herself from the lower and rise to the higher. And the growth, as well as the purging, will be complete before she can enter into the heavenly city and behold the Face of God. Does not this lead us to the reasonableness of believing in a place and a process of purification between death and the Last Judgment?

In this connection one passage of the New Testament especially offers itself for our consideration, viz. 1 Cor. iii. 12-15: 'But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble: 13. each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire: and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. 14. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. 15. *If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved: yet so as through fire!*' The belief in a Purgatory, so far as it can lay claim to scriptural proof, is practically based upon this passage. From this passage also is derived the conception that fire (whether literally or figuratively understood) is the means of the purification. It is therefore important to inquire what the meaning of this passage may be. The following are the chief points for consideration.

1. What is meant by 'The Day'?—As far as St. Paul is concerned, the answer to this question is not hard to find. 'The day' means the great day of the Lord's appearing. St. Paul uses the expressions 'the day of the Lord' or the 'day of Christ' frequently in this sense. Four times he speaks of 'that day' (2 Thess. i. 10; 2 Tim. i. 12, 18, iv. 8); in this passage, and in 1 Thess. v. 4[1] he says simply 'the day.' The same expres-

[1] R.V., 'that day'; but the Greek is simply 'the day.'

sion with the same meaning is found in Heb. x. 25. The connection of 'fire' with the Lord's appearing is found in 2 Thess. i. 7 ff.; and the idea that judgment will be part of the work of 'the day' is also present in many passages (*e.g.* 1 Cor. i. 8, v. 5; 2 Thess. i. 7 ff.; 2 Tim. i. 18, iv. 8). The expression 'the day' is therefore understood to mean the Day of Judgment.

2. **What is it which the Fire tries?**—Is it the work only which is tried? or is the man himself also subjected to the ordeal? In vv. 13 and 14 the work alone is mentioned: but in v. 15 the worker is included in the trial. He suffers loss, but is saved 'as through fire,' *i.e.* as a person or thing that has passed through fire. The worker and his work are so bound up with one another that the same fire which tests the work tests the worker also. The result cannot be tried apart from the motives out of which it sprung.

3. **What is the Purpose of the Fire?**—The primary idea is certainly that of *testing*. 'The fire itself shall *prove*, *i.e.* test, each man's work what it is.' But the testing by fire results (v. 14, 15) in the consumption of all that is base, while only that which is good abides. And thus, even in regard to the work, the idea of testing insensibly runs into the further idea of purifying. The mixed work (and whose work is not mixed?) under the testing fire loses all the perishable material built into it, while the good remains. So the testing is also a purging. This thought lies still nearer to hand when the action of the fire on the man himself is in question. Purifying by fire is a familiar idea in the Old Testament. In Zech. xiii. 8, 9, the two ideas, testing and purifying, lie side by side as here: 'In all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third part shall be left therein: and *I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined and will try them as gold is*

tried.' In Mal. iii. 2, 3, we find the fire and the day of the coming of the Lord connected as in 1 Cor. iii. 13-15: and here also the work of the fire is to purify and purge.[1] With these passages before us, we cannot limit the purpose of the fire in 1 Cor. iii. 15 to the work of testing only. The fire searches and tests; but it also in the process refines and purifies. Thus St. Paul depicts the man who has built with poor material but upon the true foundation, as passing through the fire of judgment on the Judgment Day, as 'suffering loss' in the trial, but coming forth safe at last. It is true that this passage says nothing of a place or a time of purgatorial suffering between death and 'the day.' But it does contain the idea of a purifying of the soul on the Last Day *before* it is admitted to the full glory of the heavenly life, *i.e.* in the Intermediate State. What period of time may be meant by the word 'day' in this connection we are not able to tell.

II. The Teaching of the Early Church supports this interpretation of the words of Scripture. The earliest and most prevalent Christian thought outside the New Testament regards the state of the righteous after death as one of rest and refreshment. But the idea of purifying is also found widely spread in very early times. This idea is based mainly upon 1 Cor. iii. 13-15, and in a lesser degree on certain words of our Lord (*e.g.* Luke xii. 47, 48, the 'many stripes' and 'the few': Matt. v. 26 = Luke xii. 59, 'thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite'). The thought takes shape in two ways. Some hold that on the Day of Judgment all will have to pass through the fire of judgment: the wicked will never escape from it: the righteous will be purged in it from all imperfections which still cling to

[1] We may compare two passages in 1 Peter, viz. i. 6-7, and iv. 12-19, where the thought of fire as testing is predominant, but the idea of the soul gaining strength and even being purified in the process of testing is also present.

them, and after passing through it will be admitted into heaven. This is the opinion first put forward by Origen († 253), and afterwards held by St. Hilary of Poitiers († 368), St. Basil († 379), St. Gregory Nazianzen († 390), St. Ambrose († 397), and St. Jerome († 420). Others put the time of the purification in the Intermediate State, and regard the purpose of the fire as penal and purging. This opinion is later in its origin than the other. It is very doubtful, in fact, whether it appears before the close of the fourth century. It was held (in part) by St. Augustine († 430), who refused, however, to attach any certainty to it (see *supra*, p. 41). But the chief point for us to notice in this connection is that in spite of disagreements of detail in the early teaching on this subject, both sides agreed in believing that some kind of purification is to be undergone between death and the final state by all those who depart this life in a state of imperfection yet not finally rejected in the sight of God.[1] So much has been acknowledged on all sides in the Church, both of East and West, from at least the third century A.D. The Eastern Church at the present day teaches that those who have 'repented whilst still abiding in the life of the body, though without bringing forth any fruit of their repentance . . . endure punishment (in the Intermediate State) according to and for the sins they have committed,[2] but that they obtain release from these sufferings. At the Reformation the reaction against the great abuses arising from the 'Romish' doctrines led in the case of Luther and Calvin to the vehement denial

[1] On the opinions advanced by the early Fathers see *Tracts for the Times*, No. 79, 'On Purgatory,' from which the information above given is chiefly derived. The evidence of Tertullian, the Passio Perpetuæ, and St. Cyprian does not really bear upon purgatorial punishment. See Mason, *Purgatory*, pp. 23, 24, and the *Journal of Theological Studies*, July 1902, pp. 598-601.

[2] See Duckworth, *Greek Manuals of Church Doctrine*, p. 64.

of Purgatory altogether. Yet the last half of the nineteenth century witnessed a remarkable tendency amongst leading Lutheran writers (especially Dr. Dorner and Bishop Martensen) to acknowledge a kernel of truth in the teaching of Purgatory. Martensen says: 'Though the Romish doctrine of Purgatory is repudiated because it is mixed up with so many crude and false positions, it nevertheless contains the truth that the Intermediate State must in a purely spiritual sense be a purgatory designed for the purifying of the soul.'[1] The English Thirty-nine Articles, as we have seen (p. 38), rejected the 'Romish' doctrine without supplying anything in its place. But loyal members of her communion, such as Bishop Andrewes (1555-1626), were content that the idea of a purging of the soul after death should be permitted as a private opinion. And recently Dr. Hort has expressed himself in favour of the same position.[2]

We may sum up somewhat as follows the conclusion to which the foregoing considerations have led us. Neither Holy Scripture, nor reason, nor tradition speak with such certainty as to allow the Church to insist on any form of belief in Purgatory as a matter of faith. But Holy Scripture and reason and tradition give indications which make it permissible to hold the opinion that those whose sins are forgiven may still after death undergo a cleansing by which all defects and taints clinging to the character from indulgence of sin in time past will be removed. Of the time required for the cleansing, and the place in which it is effected, we know nothing. There is nothing in Article XXII. of the Thirty-nine Articles which forbids us to hold this opinion. We may venture to add a word as to the suffering involved and as to

[1] *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 457 (Eng. trans.).
[2] See Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 554, to which I owe both these last references.

the penal nature of the cleansing. One consideration suggests itself in this connection. The most prominent idea in the picture of the Intermediate State as taught by Holy Scripture and the early Church is that the faithful departed are at rest. No conception of Purgatory which does not harmonise with this idea can be accepted. The suffering—if suffering there be—must be the suffering of one who is nevertheless in peace; as also the punishment—if the element of punishment is present—must not be such as to conflict with the complete forgiveness of the past sins. What will satisfy these, at first sight, so contrary ideas, suffering in one who is at peace, punishment in one who is forgiven? We cannot hope to answer this question fully. But a step towards its solution may be found in the thought of the great quickening of the whole spiritual life and faculties which awaits those who die in the Lord. 'To be with Christ' will give to the soul the keenest joy, the most complete freedom from all disquieting anxiety, but also the keenest pain from the deepened sense of its own unworthiness. For, 'to be with Christ' implies not only to live in His Presence, but more, to be able to see Him as He is, and desire to will that which He wills. What renewal and intensifying of penitence will follow from this! What pain at the sense of present imperfection! What striving to cast off all remaining weakness and taint of character and to put on Christ! This training of the soul beyond the grave 'unto the full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,' will bring with it rest, in the consciousness of loving and being loved by Him: suffering, in the ardent straining forward of the soul towards perfection: punishment, in the knowledge that every defect still clinging to the character is the mark of past sins: and yet, in spite of all, the blessed consciousness of forgiveness and peace with

God.[1] We cannot better express our thoughts on this subject than in the words by which Dr. Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* describes the state of the 'happy, suffering soul . . . consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God':

> 'When then – if such thy lot—thou seest thy Judge,
> The sight of Him will kindle in thy heart
> All tender, gracious, reverential thoughts.
> Thou wilt be sick with love, and yearn for Him,
> And feel as though thou couldst but pity Him,
> That one so sweet should e'er have placed Himself
> At disadvantage such, as to be used
> So vilely by a being so vile as thee.
> There is a pleading in His pensive eyes
> Will pierce thee to the quick, and trouble thee,
> And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself: for, *though*
> *Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast sinned,*
> *As never thou didst feel;* and wilt desire
> To slink away, and hide thee from His sight:
> And yet wilt have a longing aye to dwell
> Within the beauty of His countenance.
> And these two pains, so counter and so keen—
> The longing for Him, when thou seest Him not:
> The shame of self at thought of seeing Him—
> Will be thy veriest, sharpest, purgatory.'

[1] The reader may be referred to a sermon by the Rev. Fr. Benson, entitled 'The Penitence and Joy of the Faithful Departed,' published by the English Church Union.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE— PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED— INVOCATION OF SAINTS

We pass on now to the question of prayers for the departed. May we pray for the departed? If so, are there any limits as to what we may ask on their behalf? To the first question every instinct of affection in us answers, 'Yes.'[1] It would need the strongest and clearest prohibition to deny us the right and the happiness of remembering our loved ones with prayers before the throne of grace for their welfare. The burden of proof falls, not on those who encourage, but on those who would forbid such a practice: they must bring forward authority from Holy Scripture or Christian practice or reason to show why we should not satisfy a desire so harmonious with the spirit both of natural affection and of Christian love. The objection which is sometimes made that no instances of such prayers occur in the Bible, besides being probably untrue (see p. 55), would be in any case quite unfair. There are many things for which we pray without looking for instances of similar petitions in the Bible to give us authority to use such prayers. So, unless it can be expressly shown that we are forbidden to pray for the departed, our natural instinct tells us to pray for them. If the departed generally have not yet actually attained to the final

[1] This is very beautifully expressed in a short poem called 'O'er Land and Sea,' by the Rev. Walter C. Smith, D.D., quoted in *The Silver Cross*, by H. Douglas.

consummation of blessedness (see above, pp. 25-28), we may pray for their progress towards the goal, and we need not seek for any further authority in so doing than the words of our Lord, 'that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you' (John xv. 16). Can any good reason be shown why such petitions may not be included amongst the things for which we pray in the Name of Jesus Christ? Or, when St. Paul tells us to pray 'for *all* the saints' (Eph. vi. 18), 'for *all* men' (1 Tim. ii. 1), is there any reason why we should exclude the departed, and include only those who are still living?

In answer to these questions it is admitted that no passages can be found which directly forbid the offering of prayers for the departed. But it is urged by some that it is contrary to Christian principles to do so, and on these lines certain objections are alleged against the practice. It is said that the blessed dead do not need the help of our prayers, and the condemned are beyond their reach. In either case, it is said, their condition is fixed and settled for ever, and no prayers of ours can alter it. But prayer for the departed has never been intended to cover the case of the condemned. We pray only for the *faithful* departed, and if we knew for certain of any one that he was condemned we should not dare to pray for him (cp. 1 John v. 16). Yet, notwithstanding, as we dare not say of any one that we know he is condemned, so charity bids us include in our prayers all those for whom we ourselves have any hope of mercy. This disposes of the one half of this objection. To the other half—that the blessed departed need not our prayers—we answer that such a contention would cut at the root of *all* prayer for *any* object whatsoever. We cannot fathom the mystery by which our prayers help God to do that which He wills to do; and yet we may only pray for that which it is already His will to do. We cannot say, for instance, that

His kingdom would not come if we did not pray 'Thy kingdom come.' Yet we believe that by our prayers we help the coming of His kingdom. So too we cannot say that the departed would suffer loss if we did not pray for them, and yet it may be our right and our duty to intercede on their behalf.

Again, it is objected that Prayer for the Dead presupposes belief in the (Roman) Purgatory. It is true that Roman controversialists sometimes argue as if wherever the practice of praying for the dead existed, the belief in Purgatory also existed. But leaving aside for the moment the question whether the belief in Purgatory has any basis of truth or not, it is plain that prayer for the dead does not necessarily imply the existence of such a belief, for the simple reason that in early times such prayers were used by men to whom the idea of purification in the Intermediate State was unknown or unrecognised. The earliest prayers for the dead include petitions for rest, refreshment, light, peace, and a merciful judgment at the Last Day (following the example of 2 Tim. i. 18), but they contain no mention of deliverance from the pains of Purgatory. Just as the practice of praying for the dead does not mean that we expect to deliver those on whom the sentence of condemnation has been passed by the Judge, so also it need not mean that we attach to the prayers a mechanical value by which so many prayers obtain so many days less of detention in Purgatory.

We said above (p. 51) that even if no instance of prayer for the dead could be found in the Bible, we should still be right in praying for them unless it could be shown that we were forbidden to do so, or that it violated some principle of the Christian religion. We have seen that the objections urged on the latter ground are due to misconceptions of what is meant by praying

for the dead. Let us turn now to the Bible itself, and examine its evidence.

We will turn first to the Gospels. It is well known that our Lord is not recorded to have alluded to the subject. His silence has been made the ground for arguments in favour of the practice. It is said that the Jews were in the habit of praying for the dead in our Lord's time, and that as He did not condemn them for it He showed His approval. But this argument is open to two grave objections. In the first place, we could not venture to say that whatever our Lord is not recorded to have condemned in Jewish life, may be assumed to have met with His approval. The Gospels preserve for us only a small part of our Lord's teaching. A great deal of that which He said has been lost (John xxi. 25). Further, it was our Lord's method to teach by laying down right principles and attacking wrong principles, rather than to condemn or approve in detail. Details were used by Him as illustrations of great principles. Thus He selects only a few details of their false casuistry (*e.g.* 'It is Corban,' Mark vii. 11: swearing by the Temple and by the gold of the Temple, Matt. xxiii. 16-21) in order to condemn their whole method of interpreting the Law. His silence on their prayers for the dead, as on many other practices, need not imply His approval.

But there is also a second objection, which we can only state briefly here. It is by no means certain that the Jews in our Lord's time used to pray regularly for their departed. The famous instance of sacrifices being offered for the dead by Judas Maccabaeus (2 Maccabees xii. 43-45) may be taken as good evidence that such prayers were not unknown in the second and first centuries B.C. But the apologetic way in which the writer speaks of this act of Judas Maccabaeus (see vv. 43, 44) seems to show that it was at least an uncommon thing in

his time; and it is hardly probable that the Sadducees, who controlled the Temple worship in our Lord's time, should have permitted sacrifices for the dead when they did not believe in any resurrection. With the exception of 2 Maccabees there is no other mention of Jewish prayers for the dead until the third century A.D., when they appear in the Rabbinical Midrash *Siphre* or Commentary on Numbers and Deuteronomy. This treatise represents the older teaching of the Pharisees of Palestine,[1] but we cannot say with regard to this particular practice how far back the tradition reaches. So it must be left as an open question whether the Jews of Palestine in our Lord's time were in the habit of praying for the dead. Some of them most probably did; but they were probably few in number, and in their case the practice was a private and personal affair rather than a part of the national religion. In this way the entire silence of the Jewish writers of the first century A.D. (especially Philo and Josephus) is explained. In any case no argument based upon our Lord's silence about such prayers can be regarded as convincing. The Gospels, therefore, do not give us any light upon this point.

But there is a passage in St. Paul's epistles which is widely regarded as a prayer for a departed fellow-worker. The Apostle in 2 Tim. i. 16-18, after speaking of the kindness of Onesiphorus in the past, goes on to add: 'The Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day.' The expression 'that day' (see p. 45) means the Day of the Lord's 'Appearing' to judge the world. The question which arises is this—Was Onesiphorus alive or dead at the time of this prayer? There are two passages in this epistle in which the Apostle mentions 'the house of Onesiphorus,' but says

[1] See Weber, *Altsynagogalische Theologie*, p. xxvi., and Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, Div. i. pt. i. p. 145.

nothing of Onesiphorus himself. In i. 16 he says, 'The Lord grant mercy unto the *house of Onesiphorus*: for *he* oft refreshed me.' It is noteworthy that he prays for an immediate blessing upon the household of Onesiphorus, whereas in the next verse but one, praying for Onesiphorus himself, he does not ask a temporal blessing, but that he may find mercy in the day of judgment. The mere absence of Onesiphorus from home, if he were still alive, would not explain the contrast of St. Paul's language. It seems more probable from this that Onesiphorus was dead. The second mention of the 'house of Onesiphorus' is in the salutations at the end of the epistle (iv. 19), 'Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus.' Again, it would be very strange if Onesiphorus were alive that only his house should be saluted. In both of these cases the most satisfactory explanation is that Onesiphorus was dead. Two other explanations have been offered—(*a*) That Onesiphorus was one of those who had forsaken the Apostle (cp. iv. 10). But this is a mere conjecture adopted in order to avoid the conclusion that he was dead. And if this were the case we must further suppose that the house of Onesiphorus rebelled against its master and sided with the Apostle. (*b*) A supposed parallel is found in 1 Cor. xvi. 15, where the Apostle mentions 'the house of Stephanas,' although we hear in verse 17 that Stephanas is still alive. But this passage does not give us a parallel case, for the context, 'Ye know the house of Stephanas that it is the first-fruits of Achaia,' shows that it would not have been natural here for the Apostle to speak of Stephanas alone without mentioning his household, just as he says in the same epistle, 'I baptized the household of Stephanas also' (i. 16). But, on the other hand, in 2 Tim. i. 18 it is strange that he should contrast 'the house of Onesiphorus' with its head

by making different prayers for either. Again, we see from 1 Cor. xvi. 17 that Stephanas was absent from his home, which would make it still more natural for the Apostle to speak of his 'house'; while in 2 Tim. i. 16-18 the mere absence of Onesiphorus does not satisfactorily explain the difference between the prayers. And so we may hold with some confidence that we have in this passage the authority of an Apostle in praying for the welfare of the departed. But at the same time we are willing not to press the passage, for we have tried to show that even if no instance of prayer for the dead could be found in the Bible, it would still be our duty to pray for them unless it were shown either that the Bible distinctly forbids it, or that the principles of Christianity are opposed to it.[1]

When we turn to the practice of the early Church we find, as we should expect, that there is the strongest authority in favour of prayer for the dead. From at least the second century A.D. the monumental inscriptions in the Catacombs, the great Fathers of the Church, and the earliest surviving Liturgies of all parts of the Church, agree with one voice in sanctioning and teaching the duty of intercession on the part of the living for the departed. Even the earliest allusions to this practice speak of it as an undisputed matter. They show no trace of commending it as a novelty; on the contrary, they have every appearance of regarding it as a regular and long-estab-

[1] The passage 1 Cor. xv. 29 ('Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead?') on any interpretation does not help us here. The only interpretation which makes it bear upon our subject at all is that which explains 'baptized for the dead' literally of baptism on behalf of departed friends who had died unbaptized. In that case the Apostle merely mentions the fact as evidence of strong belief in the Resurrection. He could not himself have recommended the practice which he quotes; and therefore the further question whether he approved of prayer for the departed cannot be answered from this passage.

lished custom. Here and there voices are heard at various times objecting that we do not know that such prayers benefit those for whom they are offered.[1] But these voices are few in number, and not such as to command authority. It cannot be denied that the Church as a whole, certainly from the second century, and probably from a still earlier time, has never had any doubt of the lawfulness of prayer for the dead. Even at the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, when such prayer seemed bound up with glaring abuses and superstitions, the Reformers were by no means unanimous in condemning it. Luther spoke distinctly in its favour.[2] The Church in England allowed prayers for the dead framed upon the earlier models to be included in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI. in 1549, but in the Second Prayer Book of 1552, composed under the influence of Continental Reformers, these prayers were excluded. The only words in our present Prayer Book which could be taken in any sense as meant to be intercessions for the dead are (1) the words, 'that *with them* we may be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom,' in the Prayer for the Church militant, where, however, such a reference seems excluded by the altered heading of the Prayer, 'Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant *here on earth*': (2) the words 'that . . . we *and all Thy whole Church* may obtain remission of our sins and all other benefits of His passion' in the Prayer of Oblation, where the 'whole Church' may or may not be intended to include the departed: and (3) the words in the Burial Service, 'that we with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy Holy Name may have

[1] See instances quoted from Archbishop Ussher's treatise on 'Prayers for the Dead' in *Tracts for the Times*, No. 72, §§ 4 and 5.

[2] See Dahle, *Life after Death*, Eng. trans., p. 216.

our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory,' where the expression in regard to the departed may be taken either as a hope or as a prayer, but cannot be the statement of a fact (*i.e.* that the departed *have already* attained to the perfect consummation) unless the prayer be held to ignore an Intermediate State. The obvious desire in each of these three instances was to exclude anything like a *distinct* prayer for the departed. The Homilies went further than this in declaring (Bk. II. Hom. xix. 'Concerning Prayer'), 'Neither let us dream any more that the souls of the dead are anything at all holpen by our prayers': but the reason assigned (see context) for this statement in the Homilies is that there is no Intermediate State (see quotation on p. 29): and unless we here agree with the Homilies in their premises, we are not bound to accept their conclusion. It has been noticed, moreover, that the Homily does not declare it *unlawful* to pray for the dead. The history of the Articles on this point reveals a similar state of opinion. In the first draft of the Forty-two Articles in 1552, Prayer for the Dead was included with Purgatory, etc., as 'a vain thing fondly invented,' etc. But before the Forty-two Articles were finally passed, the words 'prayer for the dead' were struck out: and so neither the Forty-two Articles of 1553 nor the Thirty-nine Articles have anything to say on this subject. When we consider the other closely connected practices condemned in Article XXII. of the Thirty-nine Articles, we see that this silence is very significant, for it shows that the English Reformers declined to condemn or to forbid prayer for the dead. The attitude of the Church of England on this question in the sixteenth century may be stated as follows. It was clearly the intention of her reformers not to encourage prayer for the departed:

this is evident from the alterations made in the Prayer Book, as well as from the direct statements of the Homilies. But, as plainly, in deference to her principle of abiding by that which is 'agreeable to the Word of God and the Primitive Church,'[1] she refused to condemn such prayer as unlawful, or to forbid her children to use it. So she framed her liturgy in such a manner that those who objected to prayer for the departed would find nothing to offend them, while at the same time those who adhered to the older usage could fairly and honestly interpret her words in the sense which they desired, and she imposed no restriction on the liberty of private opinion and practice in the matter. This last point may be illustrated in the history of the English Church since the Reformation, from the words of many of her greatest sons, whose loyalty to her is beyond suspicion, who rejoice that she left them at liberty to pour out their hearts in intercessions for their beloved departed.[2]

The Church of England then allows us, if we choose, to remember our departed relatives and friends in prayer before God. We may avail ourselves of that liberty in our private prayers, and especially when we take part in the Church's great act of prayer at the Holy Eucharist. As to the further question, what to ask on their behalf, we shall do well to follow the example of the ancient Liturgies which pray for those who rest in Christ that they may have peace, light, rest, refreshment: that they may live in God (or in Christ): that they may be partakers of the joyful Resurrection and of the inheritance of the Kingdom of God. Prayer for the forgive-

[1] See the Second Act of Uniformity of the reign of Edward VI. by which the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI. was promulgated: Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, No. 71, p. 369.

[2] See quotations in F. G. Lee, *Christian Doctrine of Prayer for the Departed*, ch. 11.

ness of sins appears more rarely in the early Liturgies, and in these cases it is clear that the forgiveness prayed for is only such as the departed himself had sought before he died.[1] Perhaps the prayer most generally used by members of the Anglican Church to-day, as most appropriately expressing what they desire to ask, is the following:—'We commend unto Thy mercy, O Lord, Thy servant N., and all others who have departed from us with the sign of faith, and now do rest in the sleep of peace. Grant unto them, we beseech Thee, Thy mercy and everlasting peace: and that in the Day of the general Resurrection we and all they, which be of the mystical Body of Thy Son, may together be set on His right hand, and hear that His most joyful voice, "Come unto Me, O ye that be blessed of My Father, and possess the Kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world." Grant this, O merciful Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.'[2]

The Invocation of Saints.—The last point for our consideration under the head of the Intermediate State is the practice known as the Invocation of Saints. Let us take as our starting-point the Thirty-nine Articles. Art. XXII. deals with the question thus: 'The Romish doctrine concerning . . . Invocation of Saints is a fond thing, vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.' We have seen already (in dealing with Purgatory, p. 38) that 'Romish' is not the same as that which we now call 'Roman Catholic,' since the doctrines of Purgatory and Invocation of Saints as professedly held by

[1] A good example of these prayers may be seen in Ep. Serapion's *Prayer Book* (edited by Dr. Wobbermin and the Bishop of Salisbury, pp. 64, 79); see also Neale and Littledale, *Translations of the Primitive Liturgies*, Appendix ii.

[2] From the Communion Office in the Prayer Book of 1549.

the Roman Church to-day were authoritatively defined by the Council of Trent in its Twenty-fifth Session, December 1563, *after* the publication of the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles[1] (see p. 40). The difficulty of discovering exactly what this 'Romish' doctrine of Invocation included is very great. Fortunately on one point all writers on the Articles are agreed. The condemnation of Art. XXII. certainly covers all Invocations in which prayers were directed to the saints for gifts and privileges, as if the saints and not God were the source of these gifts. In popular worship, prayers to saints, and especially to the Blessed Virgin Mary, had come to take the place of prayer to God.[2] This was practically polytheism, and was condemned by the Council of Trent, as well as by the English Reformers of Henry VIII.'s reign. But there is another sense in which the word 'Invocation' is used nowadays which differs essentially from the superstition above described, viz. that kind of invocation in which the saints are only invoked or called upon that they may pray for us, just as we might ask a holy man living on earth to add his prayers to ours for something which we need. This kind of invocation was allowed by the Reformers of King Henry VIII.'s reign (p. 63, note), and was declared to be 'good and useful' by the Council of Trent. Whether it also is included under the condemnation of Art. XXII., or not, is disputed.[3] The

[1] I say 'professedly held,' since one great cause of confusion in the Roman controversy to-day is the very wide difference between the doctrines to which the Roman Church professes to adhere and much of the present Roman popular teaching contained in manuals and sermons issuing often from high quarters.

[2] See, *e.g.*, Erasmus, *Colloquies*: '*The Shipwreck*,' where the voyagers during the storm call 'each on his favourite saint, but not one of them on Christ.'

[3] See the article on Invocation of Saints in the *Church Quarterly Review*, January 1899, since acknowledged and published separately under the title *The Invocation of Saints*, by the Rev. Darwell Stone.

question turns chiefly on two points—(1) Who were the 'Romanensians,' this 'Romish' party? (2) What was the meaning ordinarily attached to the word 'Invocation' at that time in England? Did it mean only that kind of Invocation which most parties acknowledged to be bad,[1] or did it mean also the Invocation for purposes of intercession only? We cannot here enter into the discussion of these questions. The very divergence of opinion shows, however, that neither side can justly insist on its opinion being forced on the other. Failing certainty in this point, we may fairly sum up the position of the Articles in this way. They offer no *encouragement* to Invocation of any kind. They *certainly* condemn the grossly superstitious Invocation, but it cannot be decided beyond doubt—at any rate at present—whether they say anything at all about the other form of Invocation. At the same time we notice that all invocations were struck out of the public prayers of the Church, nor did the Book of Common Prayer contain any sentences which could be construed as Invocations. We conclude then that the Church of England, perhaps with intention, does not plainly or unmistakably condemn the moderate form of Invocation, which at the same time she does not encourage. Invocation, as far as regards the Anglican position, stands on a different footing from prayers for the dead in two respects, viz.—(1) Sentences were so worded in the Book of Common Prayer that they can

[1] Such is undoubtedly the meaning of the word 'Invocation' in the first important formulary of the English Reformation, *The Institution of a Christian Man*, A.D. 1537. This formulary and the *Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man*, which was published with the full authority of the Church of England in A.D. 1543, condemn 'invocation to saints' for the gifts which only God can bestow, but both say that it is allowed 'to pray to saints to be intercessors with us and for us to our Lord.'—Charles Lloyd, *Formularies of Faith put forth by authority during the reign of Henry VIII.*, pp. 141, 305.

legitimately be interpreted as prayers for the departed; invocations were entirely dropped; (2) it is certain that nothing is said against prayer for the dead in the Articles; it is not certain whether the same is true with regard to Invocation. Things being so, on the one hand, it is difficult to see how the public practice of Invocation of Saints could be justified in the English Church, except with the permission of the Bishop of the Diocese. On the other hand, however, it cannot be laid down that any one is forbidden to practise Invocation, if he sees fit, in his own private personal devotions. And it can also be laid down that Article XXII. forbids no kind of Invocation which can be shown to be different from that kind which it specifically condemns.

We have treated the question of Invocation hitherto solely from the standpoint of the regulations to which the Church of England saw fit to bind herself in the sixteenth century. It is time now to consider it on a wider basis. The history of the practice is, quite briefly, as follows. Nothing is said of it in Holy Scripture. With the possible exception of inscriptions in the Catacombs,[1] and a doubtful passage in Origen, we have no evidence of its existence until after the middle of the fourth century, when it appeared in the carefully guarded form of appealing especially to the martyrs for the benefit of their prayers. From this time to the sixth century it steadily grows in authority, although great voices are raised sometimes in doubt and hesitation.[2] The great impetus given to it by St. Gregory the Great (Pope 590-604) opened the way for its immense popularity in the

[1] These inscriptions are probably to be dated before the middle of the fourth century. It is not clear, however, whether we should not regard them in the light of farewell injunctions, rather than as conscious invocations of the departed.

[2] Especially St. Augustine (see Mason, *Purgatory*, pp. 148 ff.), who nevertheless approves of the practice on the whole.

Middle Ages, and for the abuses which clustered around it. It is not certain when Invocations were first introduced into the public worship; it was probably in the sixth century. The Council of Trent (Session 25, Dec. 1563) restricted Invocations to petitions for prayers only; asserted that the benefits obtained come from God through His Son Jesus Christ; and ordered all 'superstition' and 'filthy lucre' (*i.e.* on the part of those who tended the shrines of popular saints) to be swept away. But with these restrictions the Council declared that it is 'good and useful' to invoke the saints, because they 'reign with Christ,' and 'enjoy everlasting felicity in heaven.'[1]

The above is the doctrine of Invocation authoritatively held in the Roman Church at the present time. It will be seen that it recognises the Invocation of (canonised) Saints only, and bases the rightfulness of Invocation on the belief that the saints, whose time of purification is past, are in heaven. The Invocation of those who are still in Purgatory is not forbidden by the Roman Church, but it is not recognised by the Council, and would have to be justified on other grounds than those here given. According to the ordinary practice of the Roman Church the saints alone are invoked, and this for two reasons—(*a*) their prayers are more powerful with God (cp. James v. 16); (*b*) they are admitted to the full vision of God, through whom the petitions of those who invoke the aid of their prayers are made known to them.

We may now test in turn this (Roman) Invocation of Saints. Is the distinction, on which it is based, between

[1] Conc. Trid. Sess. 25: Decretum de Invocatione, veneratione et reliquiis Sanctorum et sacris imaginibus. The *Catechism* published by the Council distinguishes more clearly still between prayer offered to God and the invocations of saints. See Pt. IV. ch. vi. Qu. 3.

'the saints who reign with Christ' and the other departed who are still in Purgatory undergoing their purification, a right and proper distinction for the purpose of Invocation? From very early times the Church seems to have made a distinction corresponding to some extent with this. In the early Eastern liturgies 'the faithful departed were regarded as being in two groups, the pre-eminent saints, who were commemorated with a view to their praying to God for the Church on earth, and the rest of the faithful departed, who were prayed for with a view to their being benefited, prayers in some cases being also offered for the first group.'[1] This distinction in course of time was sharpened into the Roman distinction between the saints and those in Purgatory. But when the rightness of Invocation is based (as is the case in the Roman Church generally) on the supposition that the saints are already partakers of the full vision of God, and *therefore* are cognisant of our needs and able to intercede for us, the ground is too uncertain to bear the weight laid on it. We shall do well to hesitate, when we find that the early Church, like the present Eastern Church, prayed for *all* the departed, even for the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles, and that the New Testament itself shows us the martyrs still in a state of waiting for their full consummation both of knowledge and blessedness (Rev. vi. 10, 11; cp. Heb. xi. 40); and in Matt. xix. 28, the promise made to the Apostles is to be fulfilled 'in the regeneration' (cp. also p. 27).

But even if, as may appear to some, the Roman basis of Invocation is not sure enough to satisfy us, it does not therefore necessarily follow that the whole idea of our asking the departed for their prayers is wrong or profitless. For the Eastern Church does not base its

[1] Stone, *Outlines of Christian Dogma*, p. 249.

practice of Invocation on the distinction between the saints and those in Purgatory, but invokes the departed generally of both classes. It is this kind of Invocation which we will now consider. Its rightness or wrongness, utility or worthlessness, will be seen to rest upon the answer which we give to two questions, viz.—(1) Have the faithful departed the will and the power to intercede for us? (2) Are they able to know our needs, or to hear and answer our supplications for their prayers? On the first of these questions there can hardly be any doubt for most of us. If the departed are 'with Christ,' we may be sure that with the quickening of spiritual consciousness which that nearness brings, their prayers for us, their brethren in the world, have neither ceased nor become less powerful with God.[1] The souls of the martyrs in Rev. vi. 9-11 are engaged in such a prayer for the Church militant. To the second question, if we do not venture to assert that even the highest saints have yet attained to the full vision of God, the answer cannot be given so confidently. There are passages in the New Testament which seem to suggest that the departed may possess means of knowing what is passing upon earth. Such may be the case with Rev. vi. 9-11; but there the general character of the petition ('How long . . . dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?') does not tell us more than that the martyrs know that the kingdom of God is not yet come on earth with power. Another passage (Heb. xii. 1, 'seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses') is said to suggest the thought of spectators in the amphitheatre watching the contest

[1] Even the authority of St. Thomas Aquinas, who doubted whether the departed still undergoing purification can pray for others, has not caused the Roman Church to forbid the invoking of souls in Purgatory.

going on in the arena.[1] But the teaching of the early Fathers does not help us in this point. In spite of the universal belief that the departed pray for the living, even those Fathers who first speak in favour of Invocation, at times confess their uncertainty whether the saints have knowledge of earthly events.[2] We must therefore be content to leave this question unanswered.

We can now review our inquiry and gather up its results. In view of the comparative lateness of the practice, the uncertainty of its basis in doctrine, the uncertainty of the expressed mind of the English Church, and last but not least, the great dangers to which the practice has been found liable (see p. 62), the present writer (if he may speak, as he would desire, for himself only) would refrain from practising Invocation of Saints, while he would not venture to condemn others who did so as a private and personal matter. And at the same time to those who urge (and quite rightly) that the 'prayer of a righteous man availeth much' and that we ought to seek the aid and co-operation of the saints, it may be replied that there is another way by which we may seek and, if it be God's good pleasure, just as surely obtain this benefit. This is the way which is known as Comprecation. The Communion of Saints, which binds together in one Church the living and the departed,[3]

[1] So Bishop Westcott, *Hebrews, ad loc.* Westcott sees the suggestion in the word 'compassed,' but thinks that this idea is not contained in the word 'witnesses' (= martyrs), which he interprets as those who have witnessed for God rather than those who are witnesses of us. This interpretation he bases on the context of the previous chapter. But Alford and others definitely interpret the passage as meaning that 'they who have entered into heavenly rest are conscious of what passes among ourselves.'

[2] See quotations in Luckock, *After Death*, Pt. ii. ch. 5, and in Mason, *Purgatory*, etc., pp. 146 ff.

[3] See the thought of Heb. xii. 22-24.

rests above all on our common relation to our Lord. He is their Saviour and ours. He is present with them and with us: they and we are united with Him, and so are united one with another. If then in trouble we remember any who have departed this life, whether great saints of old or our own dear departed, whose prayers and intercessions we seek to have united to our own, we may pray to God that He will, if it seem good to Him, make known to them our special need, that so they also may help together on our behalf by their supplication.[1] In this prayer we have the authority of the early liturgies to support us.[2] It gives us all that Invocation offers without any of its uncertainty or its dangers.

[1] I have said nothing in answer to a common objection to the Invocation of Saints which would apply, if true, even to the above modification: the objection, namely, that to seek their intercessions at all is to disregard the intercession of our one Mediator. If this objection stands, it would forbid us to ask even our living friends for their prayers. 'Brethren, pray for us' (1 Thess. v. 25), would also come under its condemnation. The objection can only be valid if (as in the Romish doctrine objected to in Article XXII. and in Hom. xix.) we relied on the prayers of the saints to the exclusion of trust in the intercession of our Blessed Lord.

[2] See Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, vol. i. pp. 57, 76, and often: also Stone, *Invocation of Saints*, p. 6 ff.

CHAPTER V

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY[1]

A. The Fact of a Resurrection.—That there is a resurrection is proved by the fact that there is conscious life in relationship with God beyond the grave. It is this idea which underlies the argument of our Lord in the discussion with the Sadducees (Mark xii. 26-27 = Matt. xxii. 31-32 = Luke xx. 37-38).[2] Let us see what it means. The life which God gave to man at Creation is the life of his whole nature in all the elements which go to make up that composite nature—body, soul, and spirit. Death is the separation of those elements. Life, so far as the body is concerned, is for a time in abeyance. Thus although, as we have seen, the spirit rises into higher consciousness in the Intermediate State, nevertheless the life of that state is not the complete life of the whole man (see p. 27). If the man who dies is to be restored again to the fulness of human life, then body, soul, and spirit must be once more united, that each may share in the renewed life. The Biblical idea of human immortality does not limit that immortality to the spiritual part of man's being, but includes the whole of his nature. The man himself,

[1] The reader is recommended to see further on this subject Goulburn, 'The Resurrection of the Body,' *Bampton Lectures*, 1850.

[2] See further on these passages, pp. 75 ff.

not his spirit only but his whole self, is immortal.[1] Therefore life after death means not only that the spirit continues or resumes its active consciousness, but also that the dead body which is laid in the grave will live again. And so the same thought which had already presented itself to the minds of pious Jews as a proof of the good man's immortality (see p. 10), is used by our Lord as a proof of the Resurrection also. The Christian revelation insists upon the dignity of the body. It refuses to countenance the idea that the body is essentially evil. It is true that St. Paul says 'in my flesh dwelleth no good thing' (Rom. vii. 18), but he is there thinking of fallen man who has prostituted the body to sin. The redemption of man, in St. Paul's mind and in the whole Christian teaching, does not mean deliverance from the body as if the body is essentially evil and wholly incapable of good. It includes also the 'redemption of the body' (Rom. viii. 23). From the moment of baptism that redemption begins to take place in the Christian. His body is 'the temple (the shrine) of the Holy Ghost' (1 Cor. vi. 19): a 'member of Christ' (*ib.*, verse 15). The body is 'for the Lord' as soon as the Christian is able by the grace of the Holy Spirit to 'glorify God in his body' (1 Cor. vi. 20), to present his body 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God' (Rom. xii. 1), that is, to use the body in the service and for the glory of God: and the service of the Lord in which the body is called to share, will be continued and perfected by the Resurrection of the body. So the present indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the body is the 'earnest,' the 'pledge' of its Resurrection, which is a part of the promised redemption (cp. Eph. i. 13-14, 2 Cor. i. 22).

[1] See Mason, *Faith of the Gospel*, p. 388; Dahle, *Life after Death* (Eng. trans.), p. 406. For the further question whether the Bible teaches that such immortality is natural or conditional, see pp. 106 ff.

This is, further, a special reason why we should speak of the Resurrection as the 'Resurrection of the body.' The expression 'Resurrection of the body' is not found in the Bible, which speaks of a Resurrection 'of' or 'from the dead.' But St. Paul repeatedly shows that it is the body which is especially concerned in the Resurrection (*e.g.* Rom. viii. 11, 1 Cor. xv. 44, Phil. iii. 21); and so the earliest of our creeds, the Apostles' Creed, speaks of the Resurrection as the 'Resurrection of the Body.' This expression does not mean that the Resurrection has nothing to do with the soul, or that the soul does not rise to still higher life at the time of its reunion with the body. But while the life of the soul is continuous and not broken by death, there is (at least to our perception) a break in the life of the body, and the chief feature in the restoration of the full life is the reawakening of the body. So the Resurrection in its Christian meaning is the Resurrection of the body. This appears quite plainly in our Lord's teaching as it is recorded for us in St. John's Gospel (v. 28, 29): 'All that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth . . . unto the Resurrection.' No Jew ever thought of a man's soul or spirit as resting in the tomb: and so the words in which the Resurrection is here foretold, emphatically describe it as a Resurrection of the body.[1] The same may be said to be implied in the passages in which our Lord speaks of (eternal) punishment in Hell (Gehenna) to be undergone in the body: *e.g.* 'fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell' (Matt. x. 28); 'thy whole body be cast into Hell (Matt. v. 29-30; cp. also Mark ix. 43-47, Matt. xviii. 8-9). Outside the Gospels the New Testament references to the fact of the Resurrection are too numerous to consider here in detail. The fullest

[1] On this whole passage (John v. 23-29), see further pp. 73, 76.

discussion of the Resurrection is contained in the well-known fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians.[1]

B. The Time of the Resurrection.—At first sight the teaching of the New Testament seems to speak with two voices as to the time of the Resurrection. There are many passages in which the Resurrection is considered as a fact already present. Our Lord (John v. 25) says, 'The hour cometh, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.' St. Paul also speaks of an already present Resurrection when he tells his converts that they were raised from the dead together with Christ at the time of their baptism (Col. ii. 11, 12, iii. 1; Eph. ii. 6; cp. Rom. vi. 13). On the other hand, the great majority of passages which speak of the Resurrection place it in the future. Sometimes it is the indefinite future, as in our Lord's words (John v. 28, 29), 'the hour cometh (the words "and now is" contained in v. 25 are here significantly omitted) when all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth': or when St. Paul describes mankind as 'waiting for . . . the redemption of the body' (Rom. viii. 23), and in other passages speaks of a Resurrection still to come (Phil. iii. 11, Rom. viii. 11, 1 Cor. vi. 14, 2 Cor. iv. 14), and denies that the 'Resurrection is passed already' (2 Tim. ii. 18). At other times the Resurrection is assigned to a definite moment in the future. It is to take place '*at the last day*' (John vi. 40): *at the Lord's coming*, when He shall descend from heaven . . . the dead in Christ shall rise first (1 Thess. iv. 15, 16): they that are Christ's (shall be made alive) '*at His coming*' (1 Cor. xv. 23): 'at the last trump' (*ib.*, 52; see also Phil. iii. 20, 21). It would take us beyond the scope of our present work to inquire particularly what moment of time is meant by the

[1] See the exposition of this chapter in Milligan, *The Resurrection of the Dead.*

expression 'the coming of the Lord.' In the Gospels the coming is assigned sometimes to the immediate future, sometimes to an indefinite, unknown hour.[1] The early Christians for the most part expected it during their own lifetime. For us it is enough to know that the 'coming' in the sense of Mark xiii. 26, 27 (= Matt. xxiv. 30, 31 = Luke xxi. 27), or 1 Thess. iv. 16 ff., 2 Thess. i. 7 ff., the 'coming with power' *i.e.* the final vindication of the universal sovereignty of God, lies still in the unknown future.

We have thus to reckon with two groups of passages; the one group alluding to a Resurrection already present in this life, and as regards some men at least, even as a past event: the other group looking forward to the Resurrection as an event of the future, or more particularly of the 'last day.'[2] But the apparent contradiction disappears when we remember that the Resurrection is the rising of the body and its re-union with the soul. This can only be a Resurrection which follows after death, *i.e.* at the Last Day. The actual word 'Resurrection' is never used (except as applied to Christ) of a present or past, but always of a future event. The language which seems to speak of a present resurrection does not imply

[1] On our Lord's teaching as to the time of His 'appearance,' see Sanday, Article 'Jesus Christ' in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, ii., pp. 620, 634 f.

[2] The opinion that the Resurrection takes place immediately after death finds no support in the Bible. The only passage adduced in its favour is 2 Cor. v. 1: 'We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle (*i.e.* the earthly body) be dissolved, we have a building from God, eternal in the heavens' (*i.e.* the Resurrection body). By insisting on the present tense 'we have,' and treating the words 'if the earthly house, etc.,' as if they meant '*when* the earthly house, etc.,' some commentators have been able to suppose that St. Paul teaches here the receiving of the Resurrection body immediately after death—a doctrine not supported by any other evidence in the New Testament, in direct contradiction with the passages quoted above, and disproved in this context by the words of v. 8, which speak of the state after death as being 'absent from the body.'

what we mean by the Resurrection. It is figurative, and means the spiritual awakening from the death of sin to the new life derived from the grace of God in baptism. Where St. Paul speaks of Christians being raised with Christ, he is referring to the symbolism and the spiritual effects of Baptism. Immersion, the outward ceremony of Baptism, in its momentary plunge beneath the water and the coming up again from the water, is a symbol of the truth that the Christian is joined with his Lord in death, burial, and rising again. Baptism in its inward meaning and power, a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness, represents an experience of the spirit analogous to the experience of the body in the Resurrection. And so, while the actual word 'Resurrection' is never employed in this metaphorical sense, language applicable to the Resurrection is used figuratively of the regeneration of baptism.[1] We conclude then that the time of the Resurrection is the Last Day.

C. Does the Resurrection extend to all or only to some of the Dead?—The general language about the Resurrection would seem at first sight to make it a reward for the righteous, issuing from their fellowship with God. This is the ground on which our Lord rests His proof of the Resurrection in His discussion with the Sadducees. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will rise again because God is their God, and therefore they are not dead but alive. The restriction of this Resurrection to the just appears

[1] The first Resurrection and the Millennium of Rev. xx. 4-7 are, perhaps, best explained in a similar way. In the first Resurrection the 'souls' of the martyrs 'lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years' (verse 4). The special mention of 'souls' points to a spiritual resurrection. The Millennium is the life of the Church in the 'saints,' *i.e.* in those for whom Satan is bound and harmless, and in whose souls grace is triumphant. On the other hand, the Resurrection of vv. 12, 13 is (*a*) general, including all men; (*b*) a resurrection of the body, 'the sea gave up the dead.' See Milligan, *The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 195-223.

more strongly still in St. Luke's account of the incident: 'they that are *counted worthy of the resurrection* from the dead,' 'they are sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection' (Luke xx. 35, 36). St. Paul repeatedly makes the hope of the Resurrection to rest upon the union of the believer with the risen Christ (see above, p. 73, for references). In that case we should expect to find that the Resurrection is confined to the righteous, and that the wicked have no part or lot in it—and indeed the language of the New Testament generally corresponds to this expectation. The word resurrection is nearly always used in a good sense of the reward of the righteous.[1] But there are a few passages so definite that they can be neither overlooked nor evaded, which speak of a resurrection awaiting *all* men, evil as well as good, at the Last Day. The passage which has the greatest authority is the word of our Lord (John v. 28, 29): '*all* that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth:

[1] The following figures will illustrate this fact. Of the words for resurrection, (*a*) ἀνάστασις (*anastasis*—rising again) is used of our Lord's Resurrection eight times, of the Resurrection of the just twelve times, without qualification eighteen times, of the unjust twice only; (*b*) ἐξανάστασις (*exanastasis*—rising out of) is found once only, used of the just; (*c*) the verb ἀνίστημι (*anhistemi*='to raise' or 'to rise') is used of our Lord's Resurrection twenty-one times, of the just five times, without qualification five times, of the unjust not at all. The attempt to establish a distinction of usage in the New Testament between 'the resurrection *of* the dead' (including all) and 'the Resurrection *from* the dead' (only of the righteous) does not succeed. The New Testament does not make any such distinction. The 'resurrection of the dead' is used of the righteous seven times, without qualification only four times. If there is any distinction of language in the New Testament, it lies in the use or omission of the definite article. The Resurrection of the just is always called '*the* Resurrection,' whereas in the only passage (Acts xxiv. 15) where the word 'resurrection' is used to include both just and unjust, the article is omitted. But in the latter case the omission of the article is necessary from the grammatical structure of the sentence, so that here again nothing can be stated with certainty.

they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life: and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment.' Another very explicit statement occurs in St. Paul's declaration of his belief (Acts xxiv. 15) 'that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.'. A universal Resurrection is implied also in Rev. xx. 12, 13, in Heb. vi. 2, and in the passages in which our Lord speaks of punishments in Gehenna affecting the body (quoted above, p. 72). These passages cannot be explained away; and their meaning clearly is that, as well as the Resurrection of the righteous to a life of glory, there is also a Resurrection of the wicked to judgment and the eternal woe. The passages in which the Resurrection of the just only is in view, must not be so read as to exclude the idea of a Resurrection of the wicked also at the Last Day. And one consideration may be here suggested, which explains the difficulty by showing how two meanings became attached to the same word. Certain words in the Bible and in general Christian use, the original meaning of which did not, strictly speaking, include any idea of moral goodness or evil, came to possess a predominantly favourable or unfavourable moral significance. Thus the word 'life,' strictly speaking, is equally applicable to a good life or a bad, a happy life or a miserable; yet in the New Testament (and indeed in the Old Testament also) 'life' comes to mean emphatically life with goodness and happiness. But this does not imply that the wicked and the miserable have no 'life' in any sense of the word (see below, p. 110). Again, the word 'judgment' strictly means a decision which may be favourable or unfavourable: yet in the New Testament it has come to bear predominantly the sense of 'condemnation' (*e.g.* Matt. vii. 1, Mark xii. 40, John v. 29, Rom. iii. 8, 1 Cor. xi. 29). In this sense the righteous are said to escape judgment (John iii. 18,

1 Cor. xi. 31); yet it is not meant that they are not judged at all. The same is the case with the word 'Resurrection.' It means the renewal of the full life of the reunited body and soul: nothing is implied (strictly speaking) in the word itself as to the relative condition of the restored life, whether it is restored for better or for worse. But the Christian, whose creed teaches him to dwell (both for himself and for others) upon hope rather than upon doom, thinks both of the 'life' and of the 'Resurrection' as they will be to him who is 'in Christ Jesus.' So both words came to be used predominantly in a favourable sense as the blessed Resurrection and the blessed life, of which the believer is made partaker through union with his risen and ascended Lord. But such language nevertheless did not imply that for the wicked there was no resurrection at all, no reuniting of soul and body, and no resumption of their united life; and so the New Testament, while it speaks generally of the Resurrection as the reward of the righteous, occasionally resorts to the simpler and stricter use of the words in its declaration of a resurrection for all, both just and unjust; for the good the Resurrection unto life, for the evil a Resurrection unto judgment (*i.e.* condemnation). Thus there is no contradiction in the New Testament teaching; and the Athanasian Creed truly expresses that teaching in its declaration that 'All men must rise again with their own bodies.'

D. The Nature of the Resurrection Body.—On the Last Day the great summons will go forth—the voice of the Son of God (John v. 28), the 'shout,' the 'voice of the archangel' (1 Thess. iv. 16), the 'last trump' (1 Cor. xv. 52 cp. 1 Thess. iv. 16). At the call the body will rise again, the soul will be reunited with it, and all men will thus appear before their Maker and Judge. Such is the picture which the New Testament gives us of the general

Resurrection. It would not be wise to press the details in a literal sense: some of them may be borrowed from Jewish Apocalyptic literature. The main facts which seem to be laid down for our learning are the issuing of the Divine word of command with its creative power as at the Creation, the restoration, and the coming together of the soul and body to constitute once more the whole man in his full nature. Let us consider next what we may know of this change in so far as it concerns the body. What may we learn about it as regards its process and its result?

Of the nature of the Resurrection body in the case of the wicked we are told almost nothing in Holy Scripture. Our Lord's words, 'thy whole body be cast into Hell' (Matt. v. 29, 30: cp. Mark ix. 43-47; Matt. x. 28), may be thought to imply the continuous identity of the risen with the present earthly body: it is the same body, though it has passed into a different sphere and condition of existence. It seems also to be involved in the truth of eternal punishment that this body will be indestructible and eternally sensible to suffering. We forbear to dwell longer on this awful thought.

All that is directly told us about the nature of the risen body refers to the Resurrection of the just only. In the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, St. Paul has occasion to deal with this question somewhat fully, and it is to this chapter (especially vv. 35-49) that we will now turn. Certain features seem to stand out clearly in the teaching of this great chapter. Let us consider them one by one.

(*a*) The Resurrection body is in a true sense the same body as the earthly body. This is clear from the figure which St. Paul uses to illustrate the fact of the Resurrection as a process. We sow a seed, he says, in the ground: it 'dies': and by dying it is 'made alive' in

the form of a plant. Throughout the whole process there is no loss of identity: there is a succession of different stages or forms of life, in all of which, however, there is something which remains the same throughout. The bare grain contains within itself the germ which by growth (*i.e.* by assimilation, adding *to itself* whatever nourishment it receives), becomes in time the plant. The seed is in the plant: the vital part of the plant is in the seed. It is because it retains this identity throughout, that the full-grown plant corresponds to the seed which is sown: if we sow wheat, we reap wheat and not oats. Further, the plant grown from one grain of wheat is the same as that grain, while the (similar) plant grown from a second grain of wheat is not the same as the first grain, because in the former case there is a continuity of growth in which that which already is, assimilates to itself the things outside itself on which it lives, while in the latter case there is a break of the continuity and something else is substituted.[1] So there will be some such continuity between the Resurrection body and the body of this life (although instead of gradual, the change may be instantaneous, as those who are alive at the

[1] These two ideas—(1) the continuity of identity between the seed and the plant; (2) the single and separate individuality of each tree or plant—may be seen expressed in scientific language in the following sentence:—'When we realise that every plant was once only a single minute lump of protoplasm, inasmuch as the biggest tree, like the smallest moss, has its origin in the protoplasm of an egg cell or spore; and when we consider how, by growth and repeated bipartition, thousands of cells are evolved, step by step, from a single one, whilst their protoplastic bodies still remain united by fine filaments, we arrive of necessity at the conclusion that the whole mass of protoplasm, living in all the myriads of cells whose aggregation constitutes a tree, really is, and continues to be, a single individual, whose parts are only separated by perforated, sievelike partitions.'—A. K. von Marilaun, *The Natural History of Plants*. English translation by F. W. Oliver, vol. i. pp. 48, 49.

coming of the Lord will be changed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' 1 Cor. xv. 52), by which we shall recognise that there is no loss of identity between the two. This identity of the two underlies the thought of Phil. iii. 21, 'Who, *i.e.* the Lord Jesus, shall *fashion* anew (*i.e.* alter the *schema*,[1] the fashion which changes without destroying the identity) the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed (="made like" in its permanent attributes) to the body of His glory.' The soul will be restored to a *changed* body, but not to *another* body from that which it inhabited here on earth. The immortality of the whole man will not admit of a break in the identity of his body any more than in the identity of his soul. Just as the earthly body retains its identity, and is recognised by the man himself and by others to be the same throughout his earthly life, although science tells us that not a particle of that body remains unchanged; so, whatever be the changes through which the body passes in death, dissolution, and resurrection, it will still remain the same body; altered, indeed, but not replaced by another which has no vital connection with the old.

(*b*) But this identity of the Resurrection body with the earthly body is not to be understood in the sense that the very same fleshly particles which form the material of our body at the time of its death will be restored at the Resurrection. It has sometimes been taught that the Resurrection body will have the same bones, the same flesh, the same blood, the same tissues in all its parts as the present body has at the moment of death. Some of the Jews before our Lord's time held this belief. It is expressed in the crudest form in 2 Maccabees vii. 10-12, xiv. 46. Many of the early Christian Fathers taught

[1] On the meaning of *schema* (σχῆμα) see Lightfoot on Philippians, ii. 8.

similarly that the Resurrection was the revivification of the dead body. St. Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.*, Bk. v. ch. xiii. § 1) compares it to the raising of Lazarus. Tertullian, in his treatise 'On the Resurrection of the Flesh,' and St. Jerome,[1] upheld the same view. Others, however, (especially Origen, and the three great Cappadocian Fathers, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Basil), opposed it. It has found advocates in modern times also; we may mention especially Bishop Pearson (*Exposition of the Creed*, Article xi.). In the present day much that is insanitary in our manner of burial[2] is really based upon the same thought. Yet it seems indisputable that the New Testament does not teach such a doctrine as this. The expression 'the Resurrection of the flesh,' which was used by the early Church to emphasise its belief in the Resurrection of the body against the Gnostics, who denied it, does not occur anywhere in the Bible. The biblical language always speaks of the Resurrection of *persons*, *e.g.* 'the Resurrection of the dead,' the 'Resurrection of the just or the unjust.' It is true that St. Paul speaks of the *body* being 'quickened' (Rom. viii. 11) or 'raised' (1 Cor. xv. 44). But St. Paul distinguishes carefully between the 'body' (σῶμα, soma), the ordered organism with its parts mutually dependent and working together in harmony for the good of the whole (see, *e.g.*, 1 Cor. xii. 12-27) and the actual present flesh (σάρξ, sarx) of which the body is composed. In his simile of the seed, he shows that the plant is not a reproduction of the particles of the seed sown, but something which has grown out of it. So the Resurrection body is not the

[1] See passages quoted in Hagenbach, *History of Christian Doctrine*, ii. p. 91 (Eng. trans.).

[2] See the timely words of Bishop Gore in his address on Immortality, *Guardian*, Dec. 21, 1898, p. 1985.

body of the actual flesh which is sown here, but something which has grown out of it. Again, a few verses later, St. Paul speaks of the 'earthy' (1 Cor. xv. 47-49) (*i.e.* composed of the dust of the earth) as something which we bear here only; in another place, of the '*tent*' in which we live here for a time, which is dissolved at death to give place at the Resurrection to a '*house* eternal in the heavens' (2 Cor. v. 1-3). And when he says (1 Cor. xv. 50) 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' his meaning cannot be confined wholly to the moral sense. In the light of the other passages quoted above, it is true also in a physical sense. Further, the analogy of the body during the stages of its earthly growth suggests the same thought; for of the particles of which it is composed at any stage of its growth, not one remains after the lapse of a few years. The Resurrection body may be a material body. Perhaps St. Paul hints (*ib.*, verse 39) that it may be some kind of fleshly body; but it will not be just the same body of flesh that it was at the moment of death, gathered together again and revived in order that it may live under new conditions.[1]

(*c*) In what respects, then, besides those of which we have just spoken, will the Resurrection body differ from our present body? Our Lord, in His answer to the

[1] Our Lord's Resurrection body during the forty days before the Ascension was (*a*) a body of flesh and bones, nourished by ordinary food, (*b*) tangible, (*c*) bearing the marks of the wounds. In all these respects it seemed the same as His body before His death. But (*d*) it passed through closed doors, (*e*) it vanished apparently in a moment, (*f*) it was not directly recognisable to those who had known Him. In these ways it was changed. I have forborne to draw inferences from this Resurrection body of our Lord, because we do not know in what ways it may have been temporarily adapted to the conditions of an earthly life and for the purpose of intercourse with the disciples until the time of the Ascension.

Sadducees' question about the woman with seven husbands, shows them that their difficulty came from an unspiritual conception of Heaven and the Resurrection. In the Resurrection to which they objected, the risen ones were supposed to live again in the same fleshly body, with the same fleshly relationships one to another as before on earth. It was conceived, in fact, as the earthly life lived once more, but free from the pains of this present life and endowed with all kinds of material blessings. Such a view is swept aside by our Lord. Those who are counted worthy of the life in Heaven will be 'as the angels': in the unity of their common service and worship of God they will realise so vividly their own fellowship one with another in the Communion of Saints that every soul will lie wholly open to every other soul: and where there is nothing to separate one from another either in heart or in will or in mind, no one will be nearer to or farther from one than from others: no one will have relationships with another which would cut him off from the rest. So there will be no 'marrying or giving in marriage in the Resurrection life.'

St. Paul fills in for us some details of that 'angel-like' life to which our Lord refers. In 1 Cor. xv. 42 ff. he draws, point by point, a comparison between the earthly body and the heavenly body of the Resurrection. Contrasted with the 'corruption' of this body—its daily wearing away, growing old, death, decay, dissolution—is the 'incorruption' of the heavenly body—ever at the height of its perfection, ever fresh in the full maturity of its powers, with no waste and no weariness to be made up from time to time by sleep and food. The earthly body, wonderful handiwork of the Creator though it is, bears upon it from the Fall the marks of 'dishonour' and shame; it is the 'body of our humiliation': the heavenly body will be all of 'glory,' 'conformed to the glory of the

body' of the risen and ascended Lord.[1] This body is a body of 'weakness'—weak against the ravages of disease, weak in strength compared with many of the animals, growing weaker as old age comes on, weak against the forces of Nature, weak against the laws of time and space. In the Resurrection 'it is raised in power'; stronger than time, for it will be eternal; stronger than disease, for it will be immortal. And, lastly, the Resurrection body will be a 'spiritual' body. This expression may need some explanation. The body is not merely the home in which the soul (using this word to express the whole spiritual side of man's nature) dwells, as a passenger lives in a boat. It is also the instrument by which the soul gives expression to itself. The thought or the desire of the soul can only translate itself into action through the body; without the body it would remain only an idea. It is by means of the body that the soul communicates its ideas and wishes to others; it is by means of the body that it receives an answering communication from others. In expressing love or hatred, pleasure or fear, desire or aversion, or any other feeling, the soul must make use of the body. So the soul needs a body for its own completion. And the perfection of the body will be found to depend on two conditions: first, that it should be perfectly fitted to be an instrument for the expression of the soul; secondly, that the soul of which it is the fit instrument should be a perfect soul. This present earthly body falls short in both respects. As an instrument it can only give imperfect expression to all that the soul thinks or desires. There are yearnings of the soul which the body cannot faithfully interpret into action. There are

> 'Thoughts hardly to be packed
> Into a narrow act.'

[1] Cp. Phil. iii. 21.

There are 'thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.' In fact, the more perfect the soul is, the less able is the earthly body to be the instrument of its expression. And further, both body and soul here are vitiated by the taint of Original Sin. St. Paul had something like this in his mind when he said 'it is sown a natural body.' The body of this life does not answer to the soul that is filled with the grace of the indwelling Spirit of God; it is not a 'spiritual' body. Not that there is any inherent and essential wickedness in the body. The 'natural' appetites which it is fitted to express and to satisfy are in themselves harmless, and even divinely sanctioned for the preservation of life, and so far as the body ministers to these in their right measure, it is good. But when the satisfaction of these runs to excess and becomes a sin, the body, instead of restraining the soul, urges it on to further excess. Drunkenness in time becomes a disease, the drunkard becomes a dipsomaniac, his body perpetually craves for more drink. And when the soul rises to higher things, the body is still less able to help it. When the man wants to think deeply, the brain soon becomes weary and fails him. But especially does the body fall short as the organ of that highest part of man's soul which the Bible calls his 'spirit'; the part which the Holy Spirit chooses for His dwelling, and inspires and strengthens; by which man is brought into touch with God, is able to know the will of God for him, to assent to it, and desire to obey it; by which he is able to find peace and happiness in prayer and communion with God. When the soul strives to rise to these things, it soon finds that the body which should be its help, is a clog and a burden. At the time when we most desire to pray or to meditate, the weariness or inaptness of the body fills us with coldness and distraction. It is not yet a 'spiritual' body, and so even the imperfect

soul of this life finds that the body cannot rise to the task demanded of it. In the Intermediate State of Paradise, the soul, freed from encumbrances, resting in the presence of Christ, growing in knowledge, goes from strength to strength, is purified and enriched, until at the Last Day it will have become what it was not upon earth, entirely sanctified, perfected in holiness. And then, when the soul is perfect, the body is given back to it made perfect to match, raised in incorruption, in glory, in power: a 'spiritual' body, the perfect instrument of a soul perfectly endued with the Spirit of God. Thus is the whole man made ready for his work in Heaven, for the beholding of the Beatific Vision, for the service and the worship of His Maker.

The Resurrection, the restoration of the man to his full life, the life of his whole nature, the life which is henceforth indestructible, is the putting on of immortality, the final victory over death. 'Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory!"' (1 Cor. xv. 54). 'So shall we be ever with the Lord.' Then we shall enter into life, eternal life. Of what that life consists, its conditions, and its work, we shall consider when we speak of Heaven.[1]

[1] See pp. 116 ff.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST JUDGMENT AND ITS ISSUES—HELL

The idea of a Divine Judgment is bound up with the thought that God is the ruler of the Universe. The function of a ruler is to judge, and to judge according to the laws by which he rules. It follows that the judgment of God is an ever-present fact. Judgment is always being passed upon us and taking effect here and now. All men stand daily upon their trial. Daily the trial results for them in a rise or a fall. In other words, the unceasing development or decline of character is the verdict of God upon the past life silently but perpetually declaring itself in the present condition of each man. The man who violates the decrees of his conscience suffers a decline of character; the man who resists a temptation to evil is strengthened in character. The higher the ideal which is presented to the man's mind and conscience for his acceptance, the more searching is the trial. In this way the first coming of our Lord, the Incarnate God, the Truth, the Revealer of the Father, was a supreme test for all those to whom He presented Himself. He was 'set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel . . . that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed' (Luke ii. 34, 35). All who saw Him stood upon their trial. They must accept or reject Him. They could not pass by without making

any choice. And so, although, as He declared, His mission was not to judge but to save the world (John iii. 17, viii. 15, xii. 47), yet His very presence of necessity resulted in their judgment: 'for judgment (*i.e.* not "in order to judge," but "as leading to a judgment") came I into the world' (John ix. 39). Every one who saw and heard bore imprinted on his character the result of his attitude towards the message. He came 'that they which see not may see: and that they which see may become blind' (*ib.*). This thought is in the mind of St. John when he speaks of the judgment as a present event taking place within the man himself. 'This is the judgment that the light is come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light: for their works were evil' (John iii. 19). But this ever-present judgment taking effect within each man's bosom, does not to St. John preclude the thought of another judgment to be declared on the Last Day. The same 'word' of the Lord Jesus Christ which judges men now (*i.e.* the revelation which He delivered when on earth) will judge them in the 'last day' also (John xii. 48; cp. v. 29; vi. 39, 40, 54). The First Epistle of St. John in one place expressly mentions (1 John iv. 17) and in another (ii. 28) makes allusion to the 'day of judgment'; and the Apocalypse depicts the scene of the Last Judgment when all the dead, great and small, are judged (xx. 11-15).

We have spoken already (p. 35) of another way by which the Judgment of God is declared under this present order of things in the circumstances which attend the lives of individuals and nations. We saw that the apparent anomalies in the working of the earthly judgments suggest, and revelation confirms the belief in another judgment beyond this life, in which everything will be seen to issue ultimately in

perfect justice. In a similar way, the present inward judgment written in the character looks for its consummation in a further judgment after death. The soul which knowingly, deliberately, wilfully, and obstinately turns its back upon the truth in this life becomes growingly less capable of perceiving the light. This is the judgment which it brings upon itself—the condemnation of judicial blindness. It will go from bad to worse without knowing its own loss. But there will come a time when a final fixed limit is reached. When the Last Day comes, when time, the succession of moments and events, shall be no longer (Rev. x. 6); when change, whether of advance or of decline, is at an end (for change implies succession, *i.e.* time), then the last state of that soul, the climax of its human capacity for evil, will be reached, and then the judgment, which has been all the time working inwardly, will be openly declared to the soul itself and to all mankind. So, too, the souls of the saved, after passing through their discipline upon earth and in the Intermediate State, at the time of the Last Day will have attained their goal of perfection: for them also, time, with its attendant facts of change, succession, and growth, will be no longer; and the Last Judgment will be for them the open declaration of the perfect and eternal blessedness into which they are bidden to enter. It is repeatedly said in the New Testament, that the Last Judgment will have this characteristic of openness.[1] It will be of the nature of a formal declaration of the state of each soul, revealing to all others and to the soul itself the full depth of its misery, or the full joy of its blessedness.

As far as we can see, there is no declaration of judgment until the Last Day. It may be that the lost will

[1] See, *e.g.*, Matt. xxii. 12 f., xxv. 34 ff.; Luke xiii. 27; Acts xvii. 31; 1 Cor. iv. 5; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7-10; Rev. xx. 12.

not until then realise the full extent of their condemnation. They may not even know, perhaps, that they are lost (Matt. xxv. 44 f.). The saved, we are told, will 'have boldness in the day of judgment' when their love has been made perfect: for 'perfect love casteth out fear' (1 John iv. 17, 18). But at the Last Judgment all will be openly declared. The books (the character, that faithful record of the life that is past) will be opened and judgment pronounced according to the things which are written in them (Rev. xx. 12, 13). Men will not pass in silence and obscurity to the place of their eternal abode. Their secrets, 'the hidden things of darkness,' 'the counsels of the hearts,' will be 'brought to light' and 'made manifest' to themselves and to all men by the Voice of the Judge. They and all others will know their glory or their shame.

The Last Judgment is depicted in symbolical language in several places in the New Testament. Sometimes God the Father is represented as pronouncing sentence. But it is generally our Lord who appears as Judge.[1] To Him the 'judgment is committed,' because He is the 'Son of God,' All-knowing, All-holy, All-just, and also the 'Son of man' (see John v. 27), able to 'be touched with the feeling of our infirmities' (Heb. iv. 15).

In Matt. xxv. our Lord describes His coming to judgment. He will appear 'in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory,' with all things put in subjection under Him, will send forth His angels to gather all mankind before His throne to be judged. The 'sheep' will be separated from the 'goats,' the one placed on His right hand, the other on His left. Upon either will sentence be pronounced: to the one it will be said, 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared

[1] See, *e.g.*, Matt. xxv. 31 ff.; John v. 22, 27; Acts xvii. 31; Rom. ii. 16; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xxii. 12, etc.

for you from the foundation of the world': to the other, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels' (*ib.*, vv. 34, 41). In either case the Judgment is based upon the earthly life of the judged (*ib.*, 35-40, 42-45; cp. 2 Cor. v. 10: see also p. 33). It is the final gathering up, the consummation, in one last irrevocable declaration, of all the earlier premonitions of judgment—the completion of the work of perfect justice towards each human soul.[1]

The standard by which the Judgment is fixed for each one will be that exact measure of responsibility which belongs to him. Each man will be judged according to his light, by the law to which he knows he is bound, and by the use which he has made of his opportunities. The heathen in Matt. xxv. 31 ff. are judged by their obedience to the simplest laws of human kindness. The Gentile will be judged by the standard of his conscience, the Jew by his law (Rom. ii., 6-29, esp. 12-15, 26). And as between race and race, so also between individual and individual the standard applied to each will be that which is absolutely just for him, and the verdict 'Come, ye blessed' or 'Depart, ye cursed' declared according to it. The issues of the Judgment are two only, Heaven and Hell, the 'eternal punishment, and the eternal life.'[2]

[1] See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Supplementum, Qu. 88, Art. 1.

[2] The Bible recognises only two final places and states after the Last Judgment—Heaven for the blessed, and Hell for the damned. The former is always represented as the state and place of absolute blessedness, the latter of absolute woe unrelieved by any single hint of a lessening or respite of its pains (see Matt. xiii. 41 ff.; xxv. 31 ff.; John v. 29; Rom. ii. 7 ff.; Gal. vi. 8; 2 Thess. i. 7-10; Rev. xx., xxi.). Is it not reasonable, then, to refer the 'many stripes' and 'few stripes' (Luke xii. 47-48) to a punishment in this life or in the Intermediate State, or in both? There is no other passage which speaks of degrees of punishment in the Final State of the lost. The judgment 'according to works' at

Hell : the Punishment of the Lost.—The New Testament presents us with two aspects of the punishment in Hell. There is a negative side in which the punishment is described as the great 'loss' (*pœna damni* = the punishment of loss). The lost are driven forth from the presence of God : 'depart from Me, ye cursed,' Matt. xxv. 41. They are cast out from the Wedding feast, the scene of light and joy in the presence of the Bridegroom, into the 'outer darkness' (Parable of the Wedding Garment, Matt. xxii. 13 ; the Talents, Matt. xxv. 30 ; cp. the Ten Virgins, Matt. xxv. 1 ff.). As the essence of the blessedness of Heaven is the fulness of life with God, so the misery of Hell is the banishment from the presence of God, Who is the only source of all good. There is no place in Hell for any thing or quality which belongs to God : all there is godless and ungodly : there can be no love, no truth, no light in Hell, where all is hatred and 'blackness of darkness.' As the things that are of God —truth in the mind, love, self-sacrifice in the spirit, wedded to a glorified 'spiritual' body—are the brightness of life, so the absence of these blessings makes the unutterable loss of Hell. It is in this sense that the words 'death,' 'destruction,' are applied to the punishment of the lost (*e.g.* Rom. vi. 23, 2 Thess. i. 9, Phil. iii. 19, James v. 20). We saw that in the Old Testament the word 'life,' as applied to man, meant something more than mere existence. 'Life' to the Psalmist meant life that is full of communion with God. Because Sheol was regarded as the place where the soul ceases to have communion with God, the existence in Sheol is never called 'life.' When we turn to the New Testament we find the same ideas attaching themselves to this

the Last Day (cp. Matt. xvi. 27, 2 Cor. v. 10) is shown by Rev. xx. 12 ff. not to involve the thought, for the context speaks only of Heaven and Hell, which are there conceived as described above.

word. Our Lord shows that there is 'life' beyond the grave, by quoting the words 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' God said of the departed patriarchs that He is still *their* God: then they have 'life,' for they 'live unto Him.' St. John especially delights in dwelling on this conception of 'life' in our Lord's teaching. 'This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ' (xvii. 3). 'I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly' (x. 10). In opposition to this 'life,' the state of those who know not God is called 'death': *e.g.* 'he that heareth My word . . . hath passed out of death into life' (*ib.*, v. 24). So St. Paul speaks of the heathen as 'dead through trespasses and sin.' 'Death' in this sense is conscious existence, but existence without knowledge of God and communion with God. It is the state of those who are 'separate from Christ . . . having no hope, and without God in the world' (Eph. ii. 12). So the punishment of the lost is described by St. Paul as 'eternal destruction' (2 Thess. i. 9).[1] In another place he says of the 'enemies of the cross' that their end is 'destruction' (Phil. iii. 19). The Apocalypse calls the final punishment of the wicked 'the second death' (Rev. xx. 14). To live without God is not 'life' but a living death.

But besides this negative aspect the punishment of the lost is also described in positive terms. There is the unavailing grief and rage of those who realise their loss, 'the weeping and wailing and the gnashing of teeth' (Matt. viii. 12, xiii. 42, 50; Luke xiii. 28). But there will be laid upon them as well an active torment, 'the pain of

[1] In the words that follow, 'from the face of the Lord,' the meaning of 'from' is not certain, but the sense is probably 'separated from.' To be cut off from God is 'eternal destruction.'

sense' (*pœna sensus*). It is most often described in terms of the fiercest bodily agony of which we have experience, viz. burning by fire. Our Lord is recorded as repeatedly speaking of it in this way (Matt. xiii. 42, xviii. 8, 9, xxv. 41; Mark ix. 43; ? Luke xvi. 23). It is alluded to in many other places in the New Testament; 2 Thess. i. 8, Jude 7; cp. Rev. xix. 20, xx. 10, 15. The language here adopted was familiar to Jews from its use in the Old Testament (*e.g.* Isa. lxvi. 24) and in the Jewish Apocryphal literature (see Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 238, 264 f.; also cp. 4 Ezra vii. 36). It has been often interpreted by Christians literally of a material fire into which the wicked will be cast, and in which their bodies will be for ever burned but never destroyed. This thought is expressed in terrible language by Richard Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Pt. III. ch. iv. But the nature of the biblical language seems to imply that the fire spoken of is figurative rather than literal fire. In one passage our Lord quotes from Isa. lxvi. 24, 'Where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched' (Mark ix. 48.) It has been pointed out that the worm and the fire can hardly be understood both in a literal sense. But of this we may be sure: whether literal or not, the 'fire' implies that intense suffering is part of the punishment of Hell. Few men would wish to lay down dogmatically either that the fire is or that it is not a literal fire. But probably most men would prefer to understand it figuratively, and we are left free by the Church to adopt this belief if it commends itself to us.[1]

The duration of this punishment is very definitely stated in many places in the New Testament. It is 'eternal,' *αἰώνιος* (Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41, 46; Mark iii. 29; 2 Thess. i. 9; Heb. vi. 2). Doubt has been expressed as

[1] See Pusey, *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment*, p. 23.

to whether the Greek *αἰώνιος* really means what we mean by 'eternal,' *i.e.* everlasting, endless. The word may be taken as the adjective of *αἰῶνες* (plural = ages), 'belonging to the ages,' in which case there could be no doubt that it meant 'everlasting': or it may be connected only with the singular, 'belonging to an æon.' In the latter case, it is said, the word 'æonian' refers to a limited period. But this does not follow. For the Gospels speak of two æons only: 'this æon' or 'age' and 'the æon' or 'age to come' (Matt. xii. 32; Mark x. 30; Luke xvi. 8, xviii. 30, xx. 34, 35). 'This age' is conceived as having an end: but there is no hint or thought of any end of the 'age to come.' But if *αἰώνιος* ('eternal') means 'belonging to, lasting for an age,' when it is applied to the punishment in Hell it must mean 'belonging to the age to come': and then the notion of a limited time disappears. 'Agelasting' means 'eternal,' 'everlasting.' This is seen to be the case when we come to examine the passages in which *αἰώνιος* is used in the New Testament. The word is applied to *past* time in the sense of a period of time which had a beginning. So we have the expression 'before times eternal' (*πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων*) in 2 Tim. i. 9, Titus i. 2; cp. Rom. xvi. 25) in the sense that something may be called 'eternal' which has nevertheless had a beginning in time. But wherever the word is used of something present or future, all idea of an end to come seems to be out of sight. Only one passage has been put forward in which it is said that *αἰώνιος* is used of that which has an end, viz. Jude 7, where Sodom and Gomorrah are said to be 'set forth as an example suffering the punishment of eternal fire.'[1] It is said that the fire which destroyed

[1] The translation may be, 'are set forth suffering punishment as a warning of the eternal fire': in which case there can be no argument drawn from the passage. But the translation adopted in the text is slightly more probable.

these cities was 'eternal' only in its effects. But the Jews did not think so. The steam which to this day can always be seen rising from the Dead Sea and gave to it in the eyes of earlier ages 'the appearance of "smoke going up for ever and ever"'[1] (cp. Rev. xiv. 11; Isa. xxxiv. 10), probably suggested the expression 'lake of fire' found in Rev. xix. 20 and also in Jewish writings. The most natural way of understanding this passage is that Sodom and Gomorrah were thought to be perpetually burning beneath the lake. This explains the use of the present participle, 'suffering (at the present moment) the punishment of eternal fire.' In other passages the meaning of 'everlasting' is more clearly attached to *αἰώνιος*. In 2 Cor. iv. 18 it is contrasted with 'temporal' (*προσκαιρός*); in Philemon 15 with something which 'lasts for an hour' (*πρὸς ὥραν*). It is used of God (Rom. xvi. 26, Hebrews ix. 14) and of the final happiness of the blessed (2 Cor. iv. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 10; Heb. v. 9, ix. 15, and often). The words 'eternal life' occur forty-three times in the New Testament. In all these cases the idea of endlessness is attached to the word; and if so, we shall not be right in altering its meaning where it is used of the final punishment of the wicked. And as if to remove the possibility of our doing so, the word on one occasion occurs twice in the same verse (Matt. xxv. 46): in the first case, it is used of the punishment of the wicked; in the second, of the heavenly life of the good. If 'eternal' means 'everlasting' in the expression 'eternal life,' no other meaning can be attached to it when in the same verse it is used of the punishment of Hell.

There are other indications with regard to the duration of the punishment which point clearly in the same direction. Of the blasphemer against the Holy Ghost it is said (Mark iii. 29) 'he hath no forgiveness *for ever* (*εἰς*

[1] Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 293.

τὸν αἰῶνα), but is guilty of an eternal sin': where the parallel passage in Matt. (xii. 32) runs, 'it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in that which is to come.' The description of Hell as the 'unquenchable fire' (Mark ix. 43), 'where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,' (*ib.* 48) suggests the idea of a body continually consumed yet never destroyed. In the Book of Revelation we find the awful words (xiv. 11), 'And the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day and night'; and again (xx. 10), 'they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.' Another indication is the use of the word 'Gehenna' to denote the place of punishment.[1] 'Gehenna' was the word generally used by the Jews in our Lord's time for the final abode of the condemned; and when our Lord speaking to them used the expression 'to depart, or 'to be cast into Gehenna,' it would convey to them the thought of a place of eternal punishment. Gehenna was originally the name of a valley south of Jerusalem which was the scene of the human sacrifices offered to Moloch, and so became regarded as accursed. The name was afterwards transferred to the place of final punishment; and it was in this sense of the word that the idea of endless punishment attached itself to it. Reference is made to it in the Old Testament as the place of eternal punishment (Isa. lxvi. 24; cp. Dan. xii. 2). The same associations are connected with the word in the non-canonical Jewish literature of the first century B.C. and first century A.D. (see Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 218, 225, 302). It may, indeed, be taken as certain (see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, Div. II. vol. ii. § 26, p. 13) that the Jews of our Lord's time regarded the punishment following on the Final Judgment as everlasting;

[1] Used eleven times in the first three Gospels; only once in the rest of the New Testament (Jas. iii. 6).

and that by Gehenna they meant the place of this punishment (Pusey, *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment*, pp. 48-77). So our Lord's use of the word Gehenna would convey to His hearers the implication of everlasting punishment[1] unless some counterbalancing statement were found in His teaching. But, as we have seen, His teaching in other ways coincided with the Jewish belief in eternal punishment.

These considerations leave us little room to doubt what the teaching of the New Testament is as regards the duration of the punishment in Hell. When we turn to the early Christians outside the New Testament the same doctrine meets us again. If we take the first three centuries of the Christian Church we find, with the one exception of Origen († 253), a unanimous witness to the belief in everlasting punishment expressed in language generally borrowed from the New Testament itself.[2] Of the one exception, Origen, we shall have occasion to speak below (see p. 103). We cannot doubt, then, that

[1] Later Rabbinical theology tends to offer to nearly all Jews the hope of deliverance from Gehenna after twelve months of imprisonment. This teaching is found in treatises of the *Mishna* (representing Jewish thought of the second century A.D.; see Schürer's *History of the Jewish People at the Time of Christ*, Eng. trans., Div. I. vol. i. pp. 129, 130); see the references in Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, § 74. But it is to be noted in connection with this view (*a*) that there are no signs of its existence amongst the Jews in our Lord's time, whereas the passages from Jewish writers which speak of Gehenna as the place of eternal punishment are numerous. Dr Pusey (*What is of Faith*, etc., pp. 78 ff.) has shown good reason for attributing its origin to R. Akiba (*c.* 120 A.D). (*b*) The Rabbinical theology *never* ceased to teach the existence of a Gehenna of eternal punishment for at least *some* sinners. When it spoke of Jews escaping from Gehenna by virtue of their circumcision, and some Gentiles being annihilated after a period of punishment, it still reserved for another class of Gentiles eternal punishment in Gehenna (Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, §§ 88, pp. 393-4).

[2] See the long list of martyrs and doctors quoted by Pusey, *What is of Faith*, pp. 154-286.

the teaching of Scripture in its natural meaning, and as interpreted by the early Christians who stood nearest to it in spirit and in time, commits us to the belief in the eternal punishment of those who are finally rejected at the Last Judgment. Reason also adds to this witness its own significant hints. The Last Judgment comes at the close of time (see p. 90), when every tendency has worked itself out to its final conclusion, and progress gives way to the fixed state which we call 'eternity.' We can only conceive of 'eternity' as a never-ceasing succession of states, *i.e.* as if it were a great quantity of time, whereas it is really a timeless, changeless condition. If this is so with regard to the blessed, if their condition will be the fixed perfection of happiness incapable of increase or decrease, will not the same be true also of the misery of Hell? Is not the very idea of change an importation from our own world of time which has no place in the timeless world of eternity? Another ominous hint comes from the observation of human character in this world. Repeated evil acts grow into evil habits, habits strike deeper, and spread wider in the character. Is it not possible that an evil habit or habits may obtain such mastery over the character that it can only be said of such men, 'He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still' (Rev. xxii. 11)? Can we not conceive a man so hardened in sin that he cuts himself off for ever from God? Is not this what we mean by final impenitence? We are not left without warnings even here that punishment, instead of softening the sinner, may harden him still more, if he persists in closing his heart against God, and goad him on still further in desperate rebellion. 'They gnawed their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and they repented not of their works' (Rev. xvi. 10, 11). Another thought which should

make us hesitate before throwing over the belief in eternal punishment, is our powerlessness to grasp in its fulness the awfulness of sin. When we read of the 'wrath of God' (John iii. 36, Rom. i. 18, Eph. v. 6, Rev. xix. 15), or of the 'wrath of the Lamb' (Rev. vi. 16), remembering that 'God is love'; or when we consider that nothing less than the Crucifixion of the Lord of Glory was the cost of our redemption, we find ourselves witnessing a depth of abhorrence for sin to which we ourselves are strangers. The Justice and the Holiness of God 'cannot away with iniquity.' He cannot take back the sinner into His favour until the sinner is forgivable; and we are most solemnly warned that the sinner may harden his heart in the constant and deliberate choice of sin until he has placed himself beyond the power of return.[1]

These last words may help us in considering another question of the most tremendous import. For whom is this most terrible doom reserved? Let us remember at the outset that the determining of the answer to this question lies with God and with the soul that so condemns itself. It has been sometimes imagined that the Christian faith condemns to Hell infants dying unbaptized.[2] Again, a mistaken interpretation of some

[1] In this connection it is of help in the understanding of many of our Lord's parables to realise that where a single act is made the ground of condemnation (*e.g.* in the parables of the Ten Virgins, the Sheep and the Goats), the act upon which judgment is passed is regarded as typical of the whole life. The verdict of condemnation is not pronounced because of one single, isolated act of sin, but because the whole state of the soul is represented by that act. This is apparent in such parables as the Talents (Pounds), and the Wedding Garment. The 'sin against the Holy Ghost,' that sin which 'hath never forgiveness,' is the *state* of that soul which knowingly, deliberately, against the clearest light and the fullest conviction, turns itself away from God, and chooses the service of self and the Evil One.

[2] See Pusey, *What is of Faith*, p. 11.

of our Lord's words has led others to declare that the greater part of mankind will be sent to Hell, while a few only will be saved.[1] A still more terrible doctrine is that which supposed God, by an arbitrary act of will, to predestinate those whom He would to eternal damnation. Teachings like these have never had the authority of the Christian Church.[2] The Church 'has its long list of saints; it has not inserted *one* name in any catalogue of the damned.'[3] We know that God is All-just and Omniscient. Let us rest assured then that no man will be condemned to everlasting punishment unless the omniscience and justice of the God of Love demands this awful sentence. It follows that we dare not affirm of any one particular person whomsoever that he will be finally cast into Hell. We cannot pierce the secrets of the heart. We do not know what hidden gleams of light there may be, where we see nothing but darkness. We cannot witness all that may pass between the sinner and his God in the very moment of death. Of no one can we say that he is guilty of the 'sin against the Holy Ghost' which 'hath never forgiveness.' Even in the case of those for whom we fear the very worst, it is our duty to hope and pray for them, and leave the rest in the hands of God in the surest trust that His Judgment will be merciful and just to the uttermost.

The mistaken idea that such beliefs as those repudiated above form a part of the Christian doctrine of everlasting punishment, has caused some writers to deny the truth of that doctrine. The destructive arguments made use of by many of these writers will be found

[1] See a sermon by Dean Church, entitled 'Sin and Judgment,' on Luke xiii. 23: 'Lord, are there few that be saved?' (*Human Life and its Conditions*, pp. 97-124).

[2] See Pusey, *What is of Faith*, pp. 7-11.

[3] Quoted in Pusey, *What is of Faith*, p. 14.

to rest largely upon these misunderstandings.[1] In the place of the belief in everlasting punishment, as it is generally understood, there are two theories which have been put forward. They are known as the theories of Universalism and Conditional Immortality. Neither of them (as we shall see) denies the truth of 'æonian punishment'; both are attempts to explain it—Universalism by saying that 'æonian' does not mean 'everlasting'; and the Conditional Immortality theory by saying that annihilation is an everlasting punishment.

Universalism, also called *Restitutionism* or *Restorationism*, is the belief that ultimately Hell will be done away with, and those who are in it, after suffering punishment for an allotted period of time, will be restored to fellowship with the citizens of Heaven. In the end all men will be saved. This theory was first clearly formulated and taught by Origen (d. 253), the great leader of the Christian Catechetical school at Alexandria, in the middle of the third century A.D. The teaching was re-echoed in the fourth century by St. Gregory of Nyssa (d. *c.* 395), and in the fifth century by Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428). It was condemned in several local Councils, and also, finally, in all probability by the Fifth General Council, the Second Council of Constantinople, in the year 553 A.D.[2] Of recent years it has found favour with many thinkers to whom it has seemed to offer a 'larger hope,' in the way of escape from the awful thought of everlasting punishment. Space does not permit us to do more than set forth here, in the briefest form, the arguments by which the doctrine has been supported, and to suggest in each

[1] See, *e.g.*, quotations in Oxenham, *Catholic Eschatology*, pp. 17-30. Also Dr. Pusey's answer to the positions of Dr. Farrar (Pusey, *What is of Faith*, pp. 5-22).

[2] See Pusey, *What is of Faith*, pp. 136-153, for discussion of this question.

case the reason why the argument is found insufficient. The arguments are chiefly the following. *First*, it is said that Universalism has the support of Holy Scripture. 'Eternal' (*αἰώνιος*), it is said, does not mean 'endless,' 'everlasting,' and Gehenna was sometimes used in the sense of a place of temporary punishment. Both these contentions have been answered already (see pp. 95-98). On the other hand, it is said many texts imply that in the end *all* will be saved 'and come to a knowledge of the truth' (cf. 1 Tim. ii. 3). Such passages are (*a*) those which speak of 'life' (1 Cor. xv. 22) or 'justification' (Rom. v. 18 ff.) as given to *all* through Jesus Christ (cp. John i. 9, xii. 32; 1 Tim. iv. 10; Titus ii. 11); (*b*) others which foretell the subjection of all to Jesus Christ (1 Cor. xv. 25), or the worship paid by *all* to God (Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii. 9, 10); (*c*) others which declare the purpose of God for good towards *all* (Col. i. 20; Eph. i. 10; 1 Tim. ii. 3); (*d*) the mention of the 'times of the restoration of *all* things' (Acts iii. 21). We cannot here discuss these passages in detail.[1] In the first group the word 'all' is significantly limited, or is not emphatic, and cannot be pressed in its literal sense to support Universalism. In the second group the subjection (1 Cor. xv. 25) of all things to Christ does not involve the restoration of the lost to Heaven, and the other two passages are echoes from the Old Testament in which 'all' means only that Gentiles are included as well as Jews. In the third group we are not told that the purpose of God will be realised in the face of human persistence in sin. And, lastly, in the case of the text Acts iii. 21 we notice that the time of the 'restoration of all things' is the Day of the Lord's coming, *i.e.* the Day of Judgment; this cannot,

[1] For a full and careful discussion of them, the reader may refer to Dr. Agar Beet, *The Last Things*, Lecture xi., 'The Universal Purpose of Salvation.'

therefore, be a 'restoration' in the Universalist sense, unless it is supposed that none are to be punished after the Last Judgment.[1] Thus both on its own merits, and, still more, when confronted with the passages which imply eternal punishment, the argument of Universalism from Holy Scripture breaks down.

Secondly, the support of reason is claimed for Universalism. It is said that the omnipotence of God is irreconcilable with the eternal existence of wills opposed to His will. To this it is answered that even the temporary existence of sin is (so far as we can see) just as difficult to reconcile with the Divine Omnipotence; yet sin is a present, undeniable fact. If this argument holds, we must deny the existence of sin here and now! If we cannot do that, neither in the face of revealed teaching can we assert even the ultimate harmony of all wills with the will of God.[2] Or again, it is said that all punishment is corrective: that our Lord speaking of the 'æonian punishment' uses a word (*κόλασις*, Matt. xxv. 46) which means 'correction': that ultimately 'correction' must issue in the reformation and restoration of the corrected. Against this it has been shown that the distinction between *κόλασις* (= corrective punishment) and *τιμωρία* (= retributive punishment) is not observed in the Hellenistic Greek to which the New Testament belongs.[3] This argument is therefore based on an unsafe foundation. But, further, this form of the argument involves the assumption of a probation after death, which the Bible, so far from supporting, seems definitely to exclude (see pp. 33-35). Nor again, as long as man remains man, with the

[1] Dalman, *Worte Jesu*, i. 145, 146, translates the verse 'until the times of the *fulfilment* of all things of which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets.'

[2] See Gladstone, *Studies Subsidiary to Butler's Works*, Pt. II. ch. v. thesis 24.

[3] See Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § vii.

power of setting up his own will against the will of God, can it be assumed that a second probation or any number of probations would in the end secure his obedience. Suffering and punishment may lead only to more obstinate persistence in sin (see p. 100). Will God compel the sinner to obedience against his will, and then reward him for obeying? Universalism, in fine, neglects the moral side of the conversion from sin, viz. the reformation of character, which must be effected (with the help of grace) by the exercise of the penitent's own will. It underestimates the terrible nature of sin and its effect upon the character. It disregards the warning of the 'sin which hath *never* forgiveness.' It does not recognise the possibility that the sinner, by deliberate sinning against the light, may at last bring himself to that state at which he ceases to be able to repent, and become one of those 'whose end is destruction.' And so far as Universalism seeks to preserve the majesty or the justice of God, it is an attempt to 'make a way of escape for our Maker rather than for us,'[1] at the cost of contradicting truths which He has seen fit to reveal to us.

The second theory of which we will speak is that called *Conditional Immortality*. Immortality, this theory says, is not an essential element in the nature of the human soul, but a gift conditioned by the soul's acceptance of grace through Christ. The saved are made immortal by their redemption; the lost, who have failed to win their immortality, at some time after the Last Judgment will ultimately cease to exist. Hence the name *Annihilationism* is also given to this theory. The thought that the soul does not, by its own nature and inalienably, possess the property of immortality for good or for ill, is found in a few of the early Fathers. Justin Martyr (d. *c.* 165) in one passage seems to state it (*Dialogue with Trypho,*

[1] Gladstone, *Studies Subsidiary to Butler's Works*, p. 225.

ch. 5). The same is true also of Theophilus (*c.* 180) and St. Irenæus (d. *c.* 200), Tatian (*c.* 170). But these writers do not seem to have had any idea of annihilation as the punishment of the lost, and it is not by any means agreed that the passages in question imply a belief in Conditional Immortality.[1] St. Athanasius (d. 373) in one passage (*De Incarnatione*, ch. 4) hints that extinction may be the ultimate fate of the lost; but this is contrary to his general teaching on this subject, in which he declares his belief in the natural immortality of the soul. The chief upholder of the belief in Conditional Immortality in the ancient Church was Arnobius (*c.* 305). It has since found occasional supporters at various times.[2] But the idea did not seriously come to the front in Christian thought and discussion until the last century, when it found favour with many well-known thinkers, among whom may be mentioned Richard Rothe, Archbishop Whately, Prebendary Row, Dr. Dale. Quite recently Mr. Gladstone (*Studies Subsidiary to Butler*, Pt. II. chaps. i.-v.) and Dr. Agar Beet (*The Last Things*, Pt. III. lects. x.-xviii.; also in a series of articles in the *Expositor*, Jan.-June 1901), speaking mainly on the grounds of the evidence of Scripture, have expressed themselves very guardedly and with great reverence and restraint in favour of the possibility that the lost may ultimately be deprived of existence.

The arguments by which this belief has been supported may be summed up under four heads. *First*, it is said that the Bible nowhere teaches that the human soul is in its nature immortal. It cannot be confidently stated that such natural immortality was involved in the original creation of man 'in the image of God' (Gen. i. 26, ix. 6). Immortality is always regarded in the Old and New

[1] See Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, Book VI. ch. ii.
[2] *E.g.* Socinus, Locke, Hobbes, Dodwell: see Salmond, *ibid.*

Testament as the reward of the righteous, a gift from God secured to those who are His servants, 'for all live unto Him' (Luke xx. 38). It is pointed out that the doctrine of the natural and inalienable immortality of the soul found its way into Christian teaching from the influence of the Platonic philosophy, and that the acceptance of this doctrine gave a new meaning to the words 'everlasting punishment' in which our Lord warned us of the doom of the lost. For, *secondly*, many who understand 'everlasting' in the sense of 'endless,' contend that annihilation is an everlasting punishment because its effects are final and irreversible. It is only in the light of the doctrine which asserts the natural immortality of the soul, that the idea of everlasting punishment must be taken to involve the endless consciousness of suffering. *Thirdly*, it is said that the Bible uses the words *death*, *destruction*, *perishing*, *perdition*, of the punishment inflicted upon the wicked, as also it speaks of *eternal life* as a gift bestowed upon those who believe in Christ.[1] In other places the punishment is compared to the burning of chaff or weeds by fire (*e.g.* Matt. iii. 10, 12, vii. 19, xiii. 30; Luke iii. 9, 17; John xv. 6; Heb. vi. 8), a figure which suggests annihilation. *Lastly*, there are many to whom the idea of the eternal persistence of evil presents a grave moral difficulty, and the final extinction of the lost has seemed to them to be more consistent with the omnipotence of God.

Let us see what may be said in regard to these arguments. The first seems at first sight to recover for us a neglected truth. It is generally acknowledged that 'when you come to examine Scripture . . . you do not find any

[1] See, *e.g.*, Matt. vii. 13, x. 28; Mark ix. 45; John iii. 16, v. 21, vi. 54, xi. 25, xiv. 19; Rom. ii. 12, vi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 22; Phil. iii. 19; 2 Thess. i. 9; 2 Tim. i. 10; James v. 20; 1 John iii. 14; Heb. x. 39; Rev. xx. 14, 15.

certain assertion that souls as such are necessarily immortal';[1] and that the definite expression of belief in the natural immortality of the soul came into Christian thought from Greek philosophy. It may be also 'indisputable that the tenet never was affirmed by the Councils, never by the undivided Church, never by either East or West when separated, until, towards the death of the Middle Age, the denial was anathematised under Leo x. on behalf of the Latin Church.'[2] But the evidence of the early Fathers[3] shows us that the belief in the endless suffering of the lost could be held and was held even by those who are said to have doubted the natural immortality of the soul. And, further, is it so certain that the Bible does not assume the natural immortality of the soul? It does not, indeed, assert it. But a belief may be present in the mind without finding definite expression. And, in the case of the Jews and the early Christians, there is a reason why, unless we find the contrary implied or asserted, we should incline to attribute to them a way of thinking which amounted to a belief in the natural immortality of man. For the great majority of mankind have believed that the soul in some way or other survives death; and the possibility of further danger threatening the existence of the soul after death does not seem to have entered their minds. Speaking generally, then, the belief in survival is practically an unexpressed belief in natural immortality.[4] But we have seen that both the Jews of the Old Testament and the Christians of the New believed in the survival of the soul. Unless, therefore, we find that they had a con-

[1] Gore, Lecture on Immortality, *Guardian*, Dec. 21, 1898.
[2] Gladstone, *Studies Subsidiary to Butler*, Pt. II. ch. ii. p. 197.
[3] See Pusey, *What is of Faith*, pp. 178-189.
[4] See an article on 'The Annihilation of the Wicked' in the *Church Quarterly Review*, July 1877.

ception of something which could put an end to the life of the soul in the next world, it is more than probable that their belief in the survival of the soul imposed no bounds on the continuance of that survival, *i.e.* they assumed, it may be, rather than consciously held the belief in the natural immortality of man. But, it is said, the Old and the New Testament do conceive of the possibility that the soul after surviving death may yet suffer extinction at some time in the world beyond. Whether this is true or not depends upon the interpretation which we must give to the words '*death*,' *destruction*, *perishing*, *perdition*, applied to the punishment of the wicked, and the word *life*, applied to the reward of the righteous at the Last Judgment. Does the use of these words mean that the wicked cease to exist? When we are told 'he that believeth not hath not life,' are we to think that life and existence are synonymous? The answer must be given in the negative. For the words *death* and *life* in the Old and New Testament include much more than the idea of mere existence and its opposite (see p. 93). Life is *blessedness* of existence. Death is so far from implying non-existence, that St. Paul speaks of the wanton woman as 'dead while she liveth' (1 Tim. v. 6). The 'second death,' in Rev. xx. 6, 14, xxi. 8, is 'the lake of fire (xx. 14) in which the wicked are not annihilated but tormented for ever' (xx. 10; cp. xiv. 10, 11).[1] Dr. Agar Beet, after a careful and scholarly examination of the group of words, '*destruction*,' *perishing*, *perdition* (all connected with the Greek ἀπόλλυμι, *apollumi*), shows convincingly that while they imply hopeless and final ruin, they do not necessarily involve the idea that the thing ruined ceases to exist (*The Last Things*, Pt. III. lect. x.). If this is the

[1] On the Biblical meaning of *life* and *death*, see Salmond, *Immortality*, pp. 615 ff.

true explanation of 'death' and 'life' in this connection, the words must not be taken to favour Annihilationism. The Biblical evidence quoted in support of that theory is then reduced to the passages which compare the final punishment of the wicked to the burning of chaff or weeds—figurative expressions which cannot be made to bear the weight of proving a doctrine. It cannot be said, then, that Conditional Immortality is proved by the teaching of the Bible. Indeed, we must go further. There are passages which, if this doctrine be true, are difficult for us to understand. The words 'everlasting punishment' can hardly be thought a natural way of expressing the final doom of the wicked, if that doom is extinction. This is illustrated by the fact that the words have been all but universally interpreted otherwise than in the sense of extinction. It is not meant here that the form of expression cannot be reconciled with the idea of annihilation; but that the more obvious interpretation is that which implies the existence of the sufferer and his consciousness of the punishment. Again, when all allowances are made for the peculiar character of the Book of Revelation, can the plain statements of xiv. 11 ('And the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day and night'); and xx. 10 ('they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever') be entirely set aside?

Thus the supposed support of the Bible in favour of Conditional Immortality falls to the ground. This theory must therefore take rank, if it can stand at all, as a doctrine of Natural Theology; and here it is admitted that no particular proof of it can be alleged. Without the support of the Bible we dare not urge it as a means of preserving the honour or the justice of God. And, further, the consensus of the great majority of Christian teachers in favour of the belief in natural immortality,

whether conceived as derived from revelation or as a truth of Natural Theology, gives to that belief a weight of authority which cannot be lightly set aside.

Let this then be the last word we have to say on the meaning of Everlasting Punishment. The words take us beyond the sphere of time into that of eternity. They reveal to us a state of punishment of which there is no hint of any termination. In what the punishment consists we are told in language which seems to imply the continuance of the sufferer's existence so long as the punishment lasts. The New Testament emphatically declares the changelessness of this condition by its repeated use of the word 'everlasting' (*αἰώνιος*, aionios), and also by other terribly plain expressions. It has absolutely nothing to say of anything beyond it. The theory of Universalism contradicts this teaching. The theory of Annihilation does not necessarily contradict it, but goes beyond it, and does not give a natural or consistent explanation of it. When we have said this, however, we may concede one point. The meaning of 'everlasting' (*αἰώνιος*, aionios) is much fuller and more definite to us than it was to the early Christians. It meant to them a stretch of time reaching indefinitely beyond the range of their conception. But since their time the growth of thought and knowledge has deepened our conceptions of eternity and infinity.[1] Again, the conscious adoption and definite expression of belief in the immortality of the soul which the Church borrowed from Greek philosophy has made the idea of 'everlasting punishment' more tremendous in its significance to us than it was to the early Christians. So much may be conceded. But this concession is very far from making the early Church lend the authority of its witness to the belief

[1] See Gladstone, *Studies Subsidiary to Butler*, Pt. II. ch. iii. pp. 208 f.

in Conditional Immortality. For although it may be true that the early Christians, following the language of the New Testament, spoke of everlasting punishment without entering closely into the ideas contained in the term 'everlasting,' yet they held that the punishment involved suffering of which no end was visible within the range of sight or imagination. Annihilation is entirely foreign to their conception. For the rest, let us remember that the purpose of God in revealing to us so much as He has seen fit to reveal, is neither to satisfy our curiosity nor to justify His ways with men, but to give a solemn warning to the sinner of the end to which sin leads. Let us beware of doing violence to the words of revelation by forcing upon them a meaning suggested by our own fears or desires.

If the Church has nowhere declared authoritatively the precise meaning of those words (beyond excluding Universalism), if we see that, as private opinions, both the other two views (viz. the idea of endless suffering and that of ultimate extinction) are supported by some who have the right to be heard with reverence, we shall try to avoid a tone of dogmatic confidence or condemnation, remembering that God alone *knows* all that He will do, and 'that true and righteous are His judgments' (Rev. xix. 2).

CHAPTER VII

THE LAST JUDGMENT AND ITS ISSUES—THE REWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS

It remains for us to speak last of all of the reward of the righteous—the 'great' 'reward in Heaven,' the 'treasure' laid up, the 'kingdom' prepared for the Blessed of the Father which they are bidden to 'enter,' to 'inherit,' to 'possess,' the 'crown of life,' 'crown of righteousness' which shall be given to those who have 'fought the good fight' and finished their course. The New Testament reminds us that we cannot yet enter into the fulness of meaning attached to these ideas. Faith, indeed, tells us that 'the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.' But to realise what that glory will be, is beyond the present power of our natural faculties. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him' (1 Cor. ii. 9). 'It is not yet made manifest what we shall be' (1 John iii. 2). But although our natural powers do not enable us to understand the joy of Heaven, nor has the whole truth been revealed, yet both St. Paul and St. John go on to say that we can catch glimpses of that blessedness. 'God hath revealed them (*i.e.* the things hidden from our natural faculties) unto us through

the Spirit' (1 Cor. ii. 10). 'We know that if He (*i.e.* our Lord) shall be manifested we shall be like unto Him' (1 John iii. 3). Let it be our task now to gather together some thoughts which are presented to us in the revelation of the state of the Blessed after the Last Judgment.

We have seen that in the Resurrection of the righteous the body will be raised a glorious and spiritual body, a fitting home and instrument for the perfected soul. So will the whole man in all parts of his nature be completely redeemed. But there is still more to come. The redeemed man, perfect in soul and body, will have a new and perfect world in which to live. St. Paul, in his vivid, descriptive way, pictures (Rom. viii. 18-22) the whole created universe, which 'groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,' straining forward with outstretched head (*ἀποκαραδοκία*) in expectation of the day when it too will be 'delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.' As the 'whole Creation' became partaker with man in his shame at the Fall, so with the final redemption of man it too will be delivered from its present degradation, and restored to that perfection for which it was originally destined. This was St. Paul's belief. In Hebrews (xii. 26, 27), 2 Peter (iii. 10-13), and Revelation (xx. 11, xxi. i.), the thought is rather that the present 'heaven and earth' are to 'pass away,' to 'be destroyed,' to make room for the 'new heaven and new earth' which is to be the home of the Blessed. But whatever be the relation in which the old order is conceived as standing to the new, the thought common to all these passages is that the perfect man will be set in a perfect world, in which waste and suffering will have no place. It is in all probability the same truth which lies behind the 'regeneration' to which our Lord refers

in Matt. xix. 28, and the 'restoration of all things' mentioned in Acts iii. 21. In both cases the context points to a new state of things to be inaugurated at the time of the Lord's Coming.

Of the general nature of the life in Heaven very little is told us. Our Lord says we shall be 'as the angels' (Matt. xxii. 30, Mark xii. 25, Luke xx. 36). Again, we are told that it will be an 'eternal life': 'there shall be time no longer' (Rev. x. 6): 'death shall be no more' (*ib.*, xxi. 4). But, as we have seen, the words 'eternal life' speak to us of much more than duration of existence. They imply also its perfection. So there will be no cloud to overshadow its happiness. God 'shall wipe away every tear . . . neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away' (*ib.*). And, above all, the 'eternal life' is a life 'unto God,' in whose Presence is the fulness of joy. It is the Presence of God seen and felt in the Beatific Vision of Him by those whose union with Him is complete, which constitutes the central thought in the revelation of the glory that shall be. 'Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God' (Rev. xxi. 3).

We are moving here in thoughts which we can but very faintly realise. Still more difficult does it become when we try to go further, and ask the questions: In what will the heavenly life consist? What will be the occupations of those who attain to it? In what kind of activities will soul and body find their satisfaction and give expression to themselves? We will not attempt in this connection to do more than suggest one line of thought—the unity of the life in Heaven under varied and manifold activities. Life in Heaven has been sometimes described as if it would consist in one kind of activity

only—the activity of worship in the narrower sense of the expression of adoration. It has been said or implied that all other activities will be superseded, and that the whole being and life will be concentrated on the work of prayer and praise. The latter half of this statement does indeed contain a great truth. No moment of the heavenly life will be lived apart from the consciousness of living unto God. The unbroken and undiminished sense of the Presence of God will penetrate the whole life in Heaven. Whatever the work of that life may be, there will always be the conscious offering and presenting of the self to God through it, which will give to the whole life the character of worship. But if we imagine the activity of worship in Heaven to be subject to conditions such as those which attend the worship of the Church here on earth, we may be deceived in one respect. For it is one of the results of our present limitations that we are compelled to set apart a certain time and place for our worship, and thus to make a distinction between worship and daily work. It is true that the same spirit of fear and love towards God which inspires the worship should underlie the daily work also. But it belongs to the weakness of our human mind as at present constituted, that the thought needed for the proper performance of the daily work makes it possible for us only occasionally in work hours to lift up the soul to the conscious contemplation of God. And, on the other hand, worship, which rests upon the conscious contemplation of God, makes such demands upon the whole of our thought that the necessity of doing anything else at the same time would distract our minds. And so it becomes necessary for us here to have a separate time for the daily work—not, indeed, wholly untouched by the thought of God and the giving of glory to God—and to set apart also a special time devoted to worship only. But in

Heaven, living always in the light of the Presence of God, we shall be able to make the whole life full of highest worship, not by excluding other occupations and activities, but by turning all into means of expressing and nourishing the fervour of conscious devotion. The glimpses which have been revealed to us of that life encourage us to hope that every side of our present life which is really good, will be represented in a perfect form in the heavenly life. That life will indeed be one, because 'God shall be all in all' to it, its one End in all things, so that not the smallest part of it will be suffered to remain untouched by the purpose which pervades the whole. But also, it will be a life of infinite manifoldness and width in the sphere of its interests and activities. The description of the abode of the blest in Rev. xxi. as the holy city, the New Jerusalem, with its gates never shut, its streets, its walls and foundations, the nations walking in the midst thereof, and the kings of the earth bringing their glory into it, suggests the continuance of all the activities of sanctified social life. We shall have our relations one with another. There will be full scope for the exercise of all the moral and social virtues. St. Paul also assures us that love (by which he means brotherly love as well as the love of God) is eternal: it 'abideth' (1 Cor. xiii. 13). In their common union with God, the Father of all, the sons of God will realise their common brotherhood one with another. Selfishness, ignorance, prejudice, and all other barriers which separate us from one another here, and hinder us from knowing and serving one another, will then be broken down. The joy of mutual sympathy and fellowship will be made perfect in a life of willing, loving service one towards another. The golden chains which bind us all to God will bind us to one another also in the unity of perfect brotherhood. The dreams of social reformers will be

realised in the Communion of Saints in the City of God. What a vista of manifold activities these thoughts open out to us! And what a vision of happiness! The pleasure which we reap even here from the intercourse of close friendship with a good friend, is one of the greatest of earthly happinesses. Yet the closest earthly friendship has its limitations. It is imperfect, because neither friend is sinless, or entirely understands the other. Selfishness and ignorance make a gulf of separation between the best and closest of earthly friends, which will not be bridged over until love and knowledge are made perfect. If this imperfect friendship with one friend is the source of so much happiness, what will be the happiness of a perfect friendship not with one only but with all our fellow-citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven?

We may believe, then, that our social life will not disappear in Heaven. Each one of us (if we are 'counted worthy to attain to that world') will find his proper place in the framework of the ideal society. Each will find his happiness in ministering to his fellows in his place. If (as it may be hinted in Matt. xix. 28) there will be degrees of authority amongst the Blessed, yet the blessedness of each, as he serves in his allotted station, will be wanting in nothing to make it perfect.

May not the same be said of another great field of human life and activity—the enjoyment of knowledge? St. Paul looks forward to the perfection of knowledge in Heaven. 'Now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known' (1 Cor. xiii. 12). The Apostle anticipates, indeed, so great a change in our powers of knowing, that he speaks of the perfect knowledge as a different thing from our present knowledge. The latter 'shall be done away' (*ibid.*, 8). It is like catching

partial glimpses of an object reflected in a looking-glass. Our knowledge in Heaven will be that which comes from the direct vision of God: not of slow and painful growth, 'a coming to know' (as the Greek word γιγνώσκω implies) by processes of inference and conjecture, but intuitive, and perfect from the first, as of one who sees 'face to face,' with no veil between to hide the sight from his eyes.

Even in their present state and to our dull eyes the works of God in Creation bear witness to 'the invisible things of Him . . . even His everlasting power and divinity' (Rom. i. 20). The study of the world, as it is now, yields a revelation of the glory of its Maker. It speaks imperfectly, indeed, but unmistakably, of His power, His wisdom, His purposes. Marvellous it appears to us even now in its beauty and complexity. How much more marvellous will it appear when the whole purpose of God for it is accomplished, when the creation, no longer 'subjected to vanity,' is 'delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God' (Rom. viii. 20, 21), and when the whole World-Plan is spread open before our eyes. Much more will it declare the glory of God when each department of knowledge is seen no longer as a disconnected fragment but in its place as an integral part of the whole, and the whole is seen no longer by fragments here and there with wide gaps unfilled between, but in its completeness and its unity. And if this is to be seen in the Creation, what will it be to behold 'face to face' the Creator Himself? If the thing made is wonderful, what will the sight of the Maker be like? Once more, what a vista is opened out before us in the prospect of the boundless ocean of knowledge! And what promise of happiness, such as Origen anticipates (*De Principiis* II. xi.) in the 'unspeakable joy' of satisfying

that God-given desire of our nature to 'become acquainted with the truth of God and the causes of things.' Further, may we not believe that it will be the same with Art? The beauty which delights and enriches life here will also find a place in Heaven; but there it will be beauty touched on to perfection and wholly sanctified. The highest products of Art in all its branches—poetry, music, painting, sculpture—stir our souls so deeply because they give us far-off glimpses of the beauty of God. What will it be when we behold Him as He is?

Finally, beyond the activities of social life, and the fruition of knowledge and of art, yet penetrating and infusing them, lies that sphere of life which we may call worship; and that too will attain to its perfection in Heaven. We shall not only see the King in His beauty, but as the sons of God we shall love and worship Him. It is the concentration of the will and the affections upon God which gives a unity to the infinite manifoldness of the life in Heaven. The whole man, body, soul, spirit, will be redeemed and perfected in order that he may attain at last to the goal for which he was destined at the first—the free-will offering of himself to God. The climax of Heaven is the perfection of Love. In free and absolute self-surrender, and willing, constant, unswerving, whole-hearted dedication of his entire being, prostrate before the throne of God, man will find the fulfilment of all the yearnings of his nature. No other desire will conflict with this one aim. The love for God overflowing the whole life, and penetrating into every part, will absorb all other motives. The will, delivered in the Intermediate State from all the entanglements and imperfections clinging to it from its earthly life, and now at last arrived at its full-grown strength and sinless perfection, will assume an undisputed sway over body and soul, free and unfettered in its exercise,

running its course unhindered towards its goal, the life of sonship with God. So shall we be made free with the 'glorious liberty of the children of God.' And then it will be possible for our life to become a united, orderly, and perfect whole. Life here at its best is broken and disunited, wanting in continuous effort after good, distracted by divided aims and shifting motives. Very rarely and with great effort are we able even for a few moments to focus all our being upon God as its one End. Easily and quickly do we turn aside after some lower purpose. Yet God alone can satisfy the needs of the soul; and therefore we are restless and discontented. But there the will, redeemed, perfected, continually fixed on One Object, and master of the whole nature, will gather the scattered strands together, assign to each its true place and part, and weave the whole into the harmony and unity of a perfect life. No longer shall we be troubled by the jarring discord of conflicting motives, by the restless reaching after that which cannot satisfy, and the powerlessness to satisfy the aspirations for better things. We shall have learnt to live for one object only, and that object the purpose for which we were created: nor shall we any more seek after it in vain. 'I will be his God, and he shall be My son.' Is not the ideal of happiness here fulfilled? To love by nature Him in loving Whom our nature is destined to realise its perfection, reaching

> 'The ultimate, angel's law,
> Indulging every instinct of the soul
> There where law, life, joy, impulse are one thing,'[1]

and loving Him, to find Him and be found of Him: this is Heaven and to this blessedness may He in His mercy bring us all.

[1] R. Browning, *A Death in the Desert*, ll. 631-633.

APPENDIX

THE TWO PASSAGES, 1 Peter iii. 18, 20; iv. 5, 6.

It is impossible here to discuss the much-vexed question of the true meaning of these passages. The following, however, seem to be the decisive grounds which make the traditional interpretation the most probable :—

(*a*) The fact of our Lord's descent into Hell (*i.e.* the intermediate abode of departed spirits) is proved independently from Acts ii. 27, 31 ('neither was He left in Hades'), and most probably referred to in Rom. x. 7, and Eph. iv. 9. From the very earliest times it had an undisputed place in Christian belief.[1] This being so, the language of 1 Peter iii. 18, 19, can hardly fail to be a reference to this fact.

(*b*) The following facts—that it was the traditional interpretation from the first: that St. Augustine objected to it not as a non-natural or ungrammatical interpretation but as involving a conflict with his favourite doctrine of salvation: that since his time, and especially since the Reformation, the real objection to it has been the teaching which it is supposed to involve: that many to whom this teaching is unpalatable have nevertheless felt themselves unable to adopt any other interpretation—all go to show that besides being the oldest and most prevalent, this is also the most natural and obvious interpretation.

(*c*) The difficulties as regards grammar and context raised by this interpretation are much less serious than those which attach to any other.[2]

[1] See Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, note on Ignatius, Ep. to Magnesians, c. ix. (*Ignatius*, vol. ii. p. 131).

[2] Dorner (*System of Christian Doctrine*, Eng. trans., vol. iv. p. 128) goes so far as to say that the conclusion above advocated 'may be accepted as a result of modern exegetical research.' For a good treatment of the passage in this sense, see Huther on 1 Peter in Meyer's *Commentary on the New Testament*, and on the opposite side, Salmond, *Immortality*, pp. 458-488.

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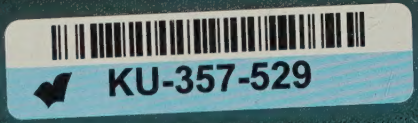
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